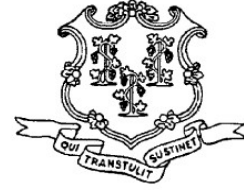


News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Preventing and identifying Lyme disease

HARTFORD -- As warm weather arrives in Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) urges the public to take steps to prevent against Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by the bite of infected blacklegged (deer) ticks. Lyme disease can be acquired in any Connecticut town, particularly in wooded areas of the state where deer are abundant. During 2005, physicians reported 1810 confirmed cases of Lyme disease. From 1992 to 2004, physicians reported 1081-2257 cases each year.

“The majority of Lyme disease cases were likely acquired from deer tick bites occurring outside the home,” stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H. “The following simple steps can help reduce the risk of infection when you are outdoors in your own back yard, or enjoying other warm weather activities:”

- **PERSONAL PROTECTION:**

- Use insect repellent containing 30%-40% DEET. Follow package instructions.
- Wear light-colored clothing and tuck long pants into the socks to make ticks easier to detect, and to help keep them off of your skin. Also, wear close-toed shoes.
- Do thorough tick checks of yourself, your children and pets.
- Completely remove any ticks found during a tick check.
- ***Research has found, the sooner you remove an attached tick, the less likely you will become infected with Lyme disease. Remove ticks within 24 hours.***

- **REMOVING A TICK:**

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick mouthparts as close to the skin as possible, and pull the tick out with steady pressure. Do not yank the tick out.
- Thoroughly wash the area with soap and water, then dry and apply a topical antiseptic.
- Hot matches, nail polish remover, petroleum jelly and other substance are not recommended removal methods, and may actually increase your chance of infection.
- Contact your physician if you are bitten and watch for early symptoms.

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- **LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT:**
 - Keep grass mowed
 - Remove leaf litter, brush, and tall weeds from around the home and at the lawn's edge.
 - Use plantings that do not attract deer or exclude deer through various types of fencing.
 - Move firewood, and birdhouses and feeders away from the home.
 - Create a 3-foot or wider wood chip, mulch, or gravel barrier between your lawn and woods.
- **PET MANAGEMENT:**
 - Minimize time that dogs and cats spend outdoors. This may help reduce the number of ticks brought back into the home.
 - Check pets for ticks when they come indoors.
 - Check with your veterinarian regarding methods to prevent your pet from tick bites.

(For additional information on tick-bite prevention and landscape management, please visit: <http://www.caes.state.ct.us/FactSheetFiles/Entomology/TickManagementHandbook/TickManagementHandbook.pdf>.)

While these steps can significantly reduce your chances of Lyme disease infection, no method is 100% effective. Lyme disease can still infect you, your children, or your pets. However, Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. If caught early, recovery outcomes are excellent.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease include:

- **Rash** – Lyme disease is characterized in the majority of cases by an expanding red rash at the site of the tick bite. Rashes can occur anywhere on the body, and vary in size and shape. The rash can be warm to the touch, but is not usually painful or itchy.
- **Fever and/or chills**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle and joint pain**
- **Stiff neck**
- **Headache**

Left untreated, Lyme disease infection can worsen and include symptoms involving joint swelling (Lyme arthritis), neurologic and cardiac complications. If you experience any of these symptoms after a tick bite, contact your primary care physician right away.

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