



County of Rockland Department of Health NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lyme Disease Continues To Be Identified in Rockland

Pomona, NY – As summer draws to a close, the Rockland County Health Department reminds all residents to be aware of the risks of Lyme disease in the fall months. Tick-borne diseases are a serious health threat. Infected ticks can transmit a variety of pathogens through their bite. Lyme disease, caused by the bite of an infected deer tick, is the most frequently reported tick borne disease in the United States. It is the most prevalent of the tick-borne diseases and continues to be identified in our area. Lyme disease may affect the skin, nervous system, joints and/or the heart. If not diagnosed and treated early, it can have permanent and severe health effects.

Participating in outdoor fall activities such as apple picking, hiking or just raking the leaves should be accompanied by some “easy to do” protections. Students playing fall sports at school are also advised to practice self-protective measures when on the field. Rockland County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Joan Facelle, urges all County residents to reduce their exposure to deer ticks so they can safely enjoy being outside. “Be Tick Free” by following three simple steps:

1. Conduct a daily tick check of yourself, your children and your pets

- Before coming inside, check your clothing for loose ticks and brush them off.
- Examine all areas of the body for ticks. Pay particular attention to the back of knees, behind and in the ears, neck and scalp, armpits, body trunk, back, waist and groin area.
- Check pets for ticks and use veterinarian recommended tick-control products.
- To reduce tick exposure, walk in the center of clear, well traveled trails and avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush and leaf litter when possible. Avoid sitting directly on the ground or on rock walls.

2. When outdoors, dress to protect

- Wear a long sleeved shirt and long pants.
- Tuck shirts into pants and pant legs into socks.
- Wear light colored clothing.
- Tie long hair back into an elastic band or wear a hat.
- Wear closed shoes rather than sandals.
- Consider the use of an insect repellent.

(Follow label instructions and consult your pediatrician before use on children)

3. Properly remove all ticks as soon as possible

- Grasp the tick’s mouthparts, where the tick enters the skin, with fine point tweezers. (Never apply kerosene, matches or petroleum jelly or home remedies to remove a tick)
- Pull firmly in a steady upward direction (not twisting or turning) until the tick releases its hold.

- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Record date and location of tick bite.

- Observe for symptoms of Lyme disease, which generally develop within 3 - 30 days after a tick bite. Symptoms can include, an expanding rash, fatigue, headache, pain or stiffness of muscles or joints, neck stiffness, slight fever, swollen glands.
- If you remove an attached tick and symptoms occur, contact your health care provider.
- For tick identification services, call Cornell Cooperative Extension (429-7085).

For more information or to request a Lyme disease educational packet, contact the Lyme Disease Education Program at 845-364-2501. Information on Lyme disease is also available on the Health Department's website at www.rocklandgov.com/health.

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