

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prevent Tick Bites and the Diseases they Carry as Warm Weather Returns to the Buckeye State

Diseases spread by ticks include Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever

COLUMBUS – As the weather gets warmer and Ohioans begin spending more time outdoors, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is urging people to take precautions to prevent tick bites and the diseases they may carry.

“Diseases spread by ticks are an increasing concern in Ohio,” said ODH Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH. “The best way to prevent tickborne diseases is to prevent tick bites by taking simple precautions at home and when working or playing in wooded or brushy areas from early spring to late fall.”



Dr. Acton also recommends people who get sick after being bitten by a tick contact their healthcare provider, particularly if they have symptoms like a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue or a rash.

Most diseases in Ohio that are caused by the bite of infected ticks happen between spring and late fall since ticks are most active during warm months; however, the blacklegged ticks that can transmit Lyme disease are active on all but the coldest days of days and can be encountered any time of the year when the temperature is above freezing. The most common diseases spread by ticks in Ohio include Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. There were 293 Lyme disease cases and 38 Rocky Mountain spotted fever cases reported in Ohio last year.

Here are some tips to avoid tick bites and Be Tick Smart!:

- Walk in the middle of trails. Avoid tall grass, brush and leaf litter.
- Use EPA-registered repellents labelled for use against ticks on skin. Always follow the label instructions. EPA-registered repellents are safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Treat clothing and gear such as pants, boots, socks and tents with a product containing permethrin, or buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Do not apply permethrin directly to skin.
- Wear long pants, long sleeves and long socks. Tuck pant legs into socks.
- Wear light colors to make it easier to see ticks.

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Check yourself, your children and pets thoroughly for ticks after spending time in areas that may contain ticks. If you find a tick attached to the body, here are some tips for safely removing them:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull it away from your skin with steady, even pressure.
- Do not twist or jerk the tick which can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth-parts easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish or any other “folk” remedies to remove a tick as these methods do not work.
- Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- Wash your hands and the bite area with soap and water.

Additional information and resources are available on the ODH website at “[Ohio.gov/tick](https://www.ohio.gov/tick).”

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