

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**With the Arrival of Warm Weather in Ohio, Be Sure
to Prevent Tick, Mosquito Bites and the Diseases They Carry**

Diseases spread by ticks and mosquitos include Lyme disease and West Nile virus

COLUMBUS – As Ohioans spend more time outdoors with the arrival of warm weather, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is urging people to take precautions to prevent bites from ticks and mosquitos and the diseases they may carry.

Most diseases in Ohio that are caused by the bite of infected ticks and mosquitos happen between spring and fall when they are most active during warmer months. The most common diseases caused by tick bites in Ohio include Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. There were 270 Lyme disease cases and 34 Rocky Mountain spotted fever cases reported in Ohio last year. The most common diseases caused by mosquito bites in Ohio include West Nile virus and La Crosse virus. There were 34 West Nile virus cases including five deaths, and 13 La Crosse virus cases reported in Ohio last year.

“You can take some simple precautions at home and when traveling to prevent potentially serious diseases caused by the bite of infected ticks and mosquitos,” said ODH Medical Director Dr. Clint Koenig. He recommends that people who get sick after being bitten by a tick or mosquito contact their healthcare provider, particularly if they have symptoms like a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue or a rash.

Here are some tips to avoid tick bites:

- 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.

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.

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- 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.

Mosquitoes can live indoors and outdoors, and some types bite during the day while others bite at dusk and dawn. Here are some tips to avoid mosquito bites:

- Use EPA-registered repellents according to label instructions.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants and long socks when outdoors.
- Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with an EPA-registered repellent will give extra protection.
- Treat clothing and gear such as pants, boots, socks and tents with a product containing permethrin, or buy permethrin-treated clothing or gear. Do not apply permethrin directly to skin.
- Mosquito-proof your home:
 - Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside.
 - Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home by emptying standing water on a regular basis from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires and birdbaths.

Additional information and resources are available on the ODH website at “Ohio.gov/ticks” and “Ohio.gov/mosquitos.”

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