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Watch for ticks



Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- The Mid-Michigan District Health Department is encouraging residents to get outside and enjoy all that our beautiful state has to offer this time of year, but also to watch for ticks.

Ticks may be tiny, but they can pack quite a punch, especially the blacklegged/deer tick, which can transmit Lyme disease.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, and a bull's-eye rash at the site of the bite. If not properly diagnosed and left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, the heart and the nervous system.

The best defense against Lyme disease is prevention. If possible, avoid shady, moist areas in wooded and grassy locations, as these are the preferred hiding spots for ticks. If you do need to venture into these areas, walk on well groomed trails and avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush and leaves.

Other prevention tips include:

- Apply repellent containing DEET or Picaridin to exposed skin, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Spray clothes with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact.
- Wear enclosed shoes, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Tuck pants into socks or boots.
- Use tick prevention products on your pets

After returning from potentially tick-infested areas, check yourself and your pets for ticks and shower immediately to wash off and find ticks that may be on you. Ticks can attach to any part of the body, but are commonly found in the hairline, ears, waistline, groin, armpits and sock line.

If you find a tick attached to your skin remove it promptly to decrease the chance of infection. Using fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Slowly and gently pull upward with steady, even pressure. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the area and your hands with soap and water and apply an antiseptic to the bite wound.

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2- Ticks and Lyme disease

If you find a tick and would like to know what kind it is, visit Michigan.gov/lyme. Here you can view photos of ticks commonly found in Michigan and even submit an electronic photo for Michigan Department of Health and Human Services staff to identify. Ticks can also be submitted to the State lab for Identification. Those identified as a type that can transmit Lyme disease can be tested if the tick is still alive. If you would like to submit a tick to the State lab for identification and possible testing, please contact Mid-Michigan District Health Department at 989-227-3111 in Clinton County, 989-875-1019 in Gratiot County, or 989-831-3615 in Montcalm County.

If you experience a fever, rash, or muscle or joint aches within several weeks of removing a tick, be sure to see your doctor. Patients treated with appropriate antibiotics in the early stages of Lyme disease usually recover quickly.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.

Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

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