



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

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Warm Weather Increases Tick Activity

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Citizens to be Knowledgeable of Tick Precautions and Tick-borne Diseases

Champaign, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) wants to remind people about safe practices to avoid ticks. As the weather warms up, people and pets come out to enjoy outdoor activities. This time of year is also when ticks become active and start to look for food. Areas with tall grass, leaf litter and wooded places are typically where ticks are found.

Several tick species are present in Champaign County. The most common tick is the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*). This tick can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis and tularemia to people and their pets. Another tick is the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), also known as the deer tick. This is the main tick species that transmits Lyme disease.

The best thing to do is to avoid coming in contact with ticks altogether. When visiting parks, stay in the middle of paved paths to avoid brushing the bordering grasses. Ticks climb up grasses and leaf litter to wait for a person or animal to brush by – a behavior called questing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that repellents with DEET of 20 percent or more can help repel ticks.

It is very important to check yourself carefully for ticks after being outside. While adult ticks are larger and more noticeable, remember that immature ticks can be much smaller and harder to see. Check every few hours and remove any ticks you find promptly. Depending on the disease, it takes hours for a tick to transmit disease-causing organisms, so finding and removing them early is very important. When returning home, bathe or shower

as soon as possible and look carefully for any ticks. Remember to check your pets as well.

Additional information on ticks and tick removal can be found on CUPHD's website at:
<http://www.c-uphd.org/tick-information.html>.

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