

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

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TO: All Academic, All Animal Care, All Epidemiologists, City and County Health Departments, All Healthcare, Lab Facilities, County EMA Directors, Maine Medical Association, Northern New England Poison Center, Public Health - Required, Public Health - Nursing, EMS, RRCs

FROM: Stephen Sears, M.D., M.P.H., State Epidemiologist

SUBJECT: **Information for Providers on Lyme Disease**

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Maine CDC/DHHS, formerly Bureau of Health

Information for Providers on Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is the most common vectorborne disease in Maine. Ticks are already out and we expect the number of Lyme disease cases to increase as the weather continues to get warmer. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Maine.

The purpose of this advisory is to:

- Provide general information regarding ticks and Lyme disease
- Remind providers to report cases of Lyme disease, including those diagnosed by erythema migrans
- Provide resources on diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease
- Remind providers that Anaplasma, Babesia and other tick borne disease are also increasing in Maine

Background:

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is carried by *Ixodes scapularis* (the deer tick). Cases have increased over the last five years in Maine, and occur in all 16 counties. Lyme disease is most common among adults aged 45 – 64, but school age children 5 – 14 also have high numbers of cases. Most infections occur during the summer months. As the weather continues to get warmer, more ticks will be out in the open, and we are likely to see more cases of Lyme disease.

Symptoms:

The most common early symptom of Lyme disease is an expanding red rash (erythema migrans) that occurs at the site of the tick bite within 3-32 days after being bitten. Fever, joint and muscle pains may also occur. Lyme disease is treatable, and the majority of patients recover after receiving appropriate therapy.

What to do after a tick bite:

- Remove the tick properly, ideally using tweezers or a tick spoon.
- Identify the tick and the engorgement level, or length in time of attachment. Tick identification is available through the Maine Medical Center Research Institute and more information can be found at <http://mmcri.org/lyme/submit.html>.
- Clean the area around the tick, and instruct the patient to watch for signs and symptoms for 30 days.
- Testing of the tick is not routinely recommended.
- Prophylaxis after a tick bite is **not** routinely recommended, but can be considered under specific circumstances including:
 - Tick has been identified as an engorged deer tick that has been attached for over 24 hours
 - Exposure occurred in an area where there is a high rate of infected ticks.
 - Prophylaxis can be started with 72 hours. Even if prophylaxis is used, monitoring for symptoms for 30 days is recommended.

If Lyme disease is suspected:

- Preferred laboratory testing is a two tier method, with an EIA or IFA test followed by Western Blot for both IgG and IgM
- IgM is only considered reliable in the first month after exposure
- IDSA guidelines for assessment, treatment, and prevention of Lyme disease are available at <http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/9/1089.full>

What to report:

Lyme disease is a reportable condition in the state of Maine. Report all diagnosed erythema migrans rashes and all positive lab diagnoses. Cases can be reported by fax at 1-800-293-7534 or by phone at 1-800-821-5821.

Other tick borne diseases:

Other diseases that are carried by ticks in Maine include Babesiosis and Anaplasmosis. Symptoms of Anaplasma include: fever, headache, malaise and body aches. Symptoms of Babesia include: extreme fatigue, aches, fever, chills, sweating, dark urine, and possibly anemia. A Physician's Reference Guide is available and describes the most common tick borne diseases in Maine. This guide can be found on our website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/vector-borne/index.shtml> under Resources. Paper copies can be requested through disease.reporting@maine.gov.

Additional information:

- For more information on tick borne diseases including Lyme: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/vector-borne/index.shtml>
- For IDSA Lyme disease treatment guidelines: <http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/9/1089.full>
- Disease consultation and reporting available through Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821