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Tick Aware and Tick Alert

Lyme disease remains the most common vectorborne disease in Maine and can be transmitted to both humans and animals. Providers reported over 1,400 human cases of Lyme disease in 2018 (preliminary data as of 3/25/19). While ticks can be active at any temperature above freezing, they are most active in warmer months.

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Maine, and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) is asking Maine Veterinarians to help stress the importance of tick education. Education and prevention methods are important for both humans and pets, and veterinarians play an important role in educating pet owners. Please help pet owners by reminding them to:

- 1) Use caution in areas where ticks may be found;
- 2) Wear light-colored clothing that covers arms and legs;
- 3) Use EPA approved repellent such as: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus; and
- 4) Perform tick checks daily and after any outdoor activity on themselves and any outdoor pets. Taking a shower after exposure to a tick habitat is an effective way to wash off any unattached ticks and provides a good opportunity to do a tick check.

Additionally, it is important to remind pet owners to treat pets with preventatives. Lyme disease is caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* which is transmitted through the bite of an infected deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*). The tick must be attached for 24-48 hours to transmit the bacteria, which is why it is vital to stress prompt, proper, and careful removal of attached ticks from both humans and pets.

Maine CDC would appreciate it if you would continue to remind pet owners that:

- Animals and humans are susceptible to Lyme disease.
- Daily tick checks are important for both animal and human health.
- Prompt and proper removal of attached ticks from both animals and humans will help prevent Lyme disease.
- Using acaricides on pets can help reduce the number of ticks that are brought into the home.
- There is a vaccine to prevent Lyme disease in dogs; however there is not a human vaccine.
- Lyme disease is treatable in humans and animals with antibiotics.

Lyme disease is not the only disease that can be carried by deer ticks in Maine. Anaplasmosis, babesiosis, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and Powassan are other tickborne infections found in Maine. The number of provider-reported human cases of anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Powassan

decreased in 2018 while reported cases of *Borrelia miayamotoi* increased slightly. All four remain a public health concern and Maine CDC requests individuals remain diligent in the continued efforts to further limit these diseases.

While the deer tick is the only species of tick in Maine that can spread Lyme disease, there are a number of other species of ticks found across the state. Tick identification is important, especially when removing ticks, and there are tick identification resources available to order at Maine CDC's website. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick ID Lab also offers identification and testing services as well as educational references.

Thank you for your invaluable help in preventing Lyme disease here in Maine.

Resources:

- Maine CDC has Lyme disease information available on our website at: <http://www.maine.gov/lyme>
- UMaine Extension Tick ID Lab: <http://umaine.edu/ipm/tickid/>
- Educational materials can also be ordered through our website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/order-form-wn.shtml>
- Human Lyme disease data is available through the Maine Tracking Network at: [Data Portal - Lyme](#)
- To continue getting Lyme updates throughout May please like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MaineCDC>
- For additional questions, please call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or email disease.reporting@maine.gov
- Tickborne videos can be found on our website <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/videos.shtml>