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## Tick Tock!

Health care providers in Maine reported a record number of Lyme disease cases in 2019, with 2,079 cases (as of January 15, 2020). Though ticks can be active at any temperature above freezing, most tick activity occurs in the warmer months. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Maine and Maine CDC asks health care providers to stress the importance of tick education in the prevention of tickborne disease. The 2020 Lyme Disease Awareness Month theme, “Tick Tock,” reminds us to take time to practice tick prevention. This includes:

- 1) Using caution in areas where ticks may be found
- 2) Wearing light-colored clothing that covers arms and legs
- 3) Using EPA approved repellents
- 4) Performing daily tick checks after being outdoors on ourselves, all family members, and any pets. Showering after exposure to tick habitat is a great opportunity to do a tick check and may wash off any unattached ticks.

### Important to Remember

- Lyme disease is preventable by avoiding contact with infected ticks.
- An infected deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) must be attached for 24-48 hours in order to transmit the bacterium that causes Lyme disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*).
- The most common early symptom of Lyme disease is an *erythema migrans* (EM; “bull’s-eye” rash) appearing 3-30 days after transmission (in about 50% of cases in Maine). Other early symptoms include: fatigue, fever, headaches, arthralgia, and myalgia.
- Disseminated symptoms include: arthritis (including joint swelling), Bell’s palsy and other cranial neuritis, encephalitis, lymphocytic meningitis, radiculoneuropathy, and second- or third-degree atrioventricular block.
- Antibiotic therapy is effective for the treatment of Lyme disease. Clinical treatment guidelines are available at the Infectious Diseases Society of America’s (IDSA) website.

Lyme disease is not the only disease that can result from a deer tick bite. Anaplasmosis, babesiosis, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and Powassan are other tickborne infections found in Maine. In 2019, the number of human anaplasmosis cases increased to 685, the number of human babesiosis cases increased to 138, the number of human cases of *Borrelia miyamotoi* increased to 12, and there was one identified case of Powassan (preliminary data as of 1/15/2020). The majority of tickborne illnesses occur during the summer months when ticks and humans are active outdoors.

Thank you for your invaluable help in the prevention and early identification of tickborne diseases here in Maine.

**Resources:**

- IDSA treatment guidelines available at <http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/9/1089.full>
- Lyme disease case report form available on the web at <http://www.maine.gov/lyme> under Resources for Physicians
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick ID Lab submission instructions found at <http://extension.umaine.edu/ticks/>
- To continue getting 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](mailto:disease.reporting@maine.gov)
- Tickborne videos can be found on our website [www.maine.gov/idepi](http://www.maine.gov/idepi) under Videos on the left-hand side of the page.
- Human Lyme disease data is available through the Maine Tracking Network at <http://www.maine.gov/lyme> under EPI Information on the left-hand side of the page.