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Lyme Disease Awareness Month: Little Tick, Big Deal

With warmer weather on its way, Maine's ticks are coming out to play. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month (LDAM) and the Maine CDC reminds everyone to protect themselves from tickborne diseases.

The LDAM theme this year is "Little Tick, Big Deal." Make tick bite prevention a big deal every day by taking these steps:

- **Know** when you are in tick habitat.
- **Wear** light-colored clothing that covers arms and legs.
- **Use** an EPA-approved repellent such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus on skin. Use permethrin on clothing.
- **Check** for ticks daily and after any outdoor activity. Check family members and pets too. Take a shower after being out in tick habitat to wash off any crawling ticks.
- **Remove** clothes when you get home and put them in the dryer before washing. Use high heat for 10-15 minutes to kill any crawling ticks.

If You Get a Tick Bite:

Step 1: Remove the tick quickly. Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers. Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick.

Step 2: Check for symptoms. Look for symptoms for up to 30 days after a tick bite. Early symptoms include:

- Fever and chills
- Feeling very tired
- Muscle or joint soreness
- Headache
- Bullseye rash. This is a non-itchy rash that slowly expands in size. This rash can show up anywhere on your body, not just where the tick bit you. Make sure to check all over your body.

Step 3: Call a health care provider. If you see a bullseye rash or start to feel any of these symptoms, talk to a health care provider. Make sure to mention any recent tick bites or time spent in tick habitat.

For more information on tickborne diseases, visit www.maine.gov/dhhs/vectorborne.