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## Tick Tock!

As the weather warms, ticks are becoming more active. Lyme disease remains the most common vectorborne disease in Maine, with health care providers reporting a record number of human Lyme disease cases in 2019 (2,079 cases as of January 15, 2020). Tickborne disease poses a significant threat to both human and animal health in Maine.

Tick-bite prevention remains the most important method for prevention of tickborne disease for both humans and pets, and you play an important role in educating pet owners. This year's Lyme Disease Awareness Month theme, "Tick Tock," reminds us all to take time to practice tick prevention, both for ourselves and our four-legged friends. 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
- 4) Perform daily tick checks after being outdoors on themselves 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.
- 5) Use acaricide on pets to help reduce the number of ticks that are brought into the home and protect pets from tickborne disease transmission.

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*). Therefore, it is vital to stress prompt, proper, and careful removal of attached ticks from both humans and pets. While there is a vaccine available to prevent Lyme disease in dogs, a human vaccine is not available. However, Lyme disease is treatable in humans and animals with appropriate antibiotic treatment.

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 all four diseases increased in 2019, and all remain a public health concern.

While the deer tick is the only species of tick in Maine that can pass the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, there are several other species of ticks found across the state. Tick identification is important 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://extension.umaine.edu/ticks/>
- Educational materials can also be ordered through our website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/order>
- 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](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.