



ChallengeME MONTHLY MINUTE

VOL 08, ISSUE 5 / May 2023 | mainedot.gov/challengeme

Monthly topic: **Allergies, Ticks, and Brown Tail Moth**



What Allergies Are in Maine in May?

- Summer allergies in Maine will mostly consist of grass allergies. The grass allergies in Maine will include ryegrass and bent, timothy, brome, fescue, sweet vernal, and orchard grass pollen. Late May is usually the beginning of grass allergies, with the peak happening in June.
- Tree pollen occurs first, typically from late March to mid-May, and affects around 25% of people. Most people are allergic to grass pollen (which actually has two peaks) and the season lasts from mid-May until July.

Dealing with allergies: Pollens adhere to our mucus membranes. Cleanse your nose, manage stress, dust regularly, and stay inside during high pollen counts.

Know Your Ticks

- The Deer Tick transmits Lyme disease in New England. Nymphal ticks, active from about May–July, are most responsible for human cases of Lyme disease. Adult ticks, also able to transmit infection, are active from October to December and again from April to June. Adult Deer Ticks (Enlarged image) Actual Size of the Deer Tick Nymph Adult Engorged (1/32"-1/16") (1/8") (up to 1/2")
- Lone star ticks are most abundant in southern and coastal Maine. Often found in dry forested sites with shrub undergrowth and along rivers and streams near animal resting places

Dealing with ticks: Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear. Do not apply permethrin directly to your skin. Use repellents that contain 20-30% DEET on exposed skin and clothing. Other repellents recommended by the CDC include picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535.



Deer Tick

Lone Star Tick

Brown Dog Tick



Browntail Moth

Browntail moth caterpillars have tiny poisonous hairs that can cause skin reactions similar to poison ivy and other more severe reactions. The caterpillars may reach 1.5 inches in length and are brown with a broken white stripe on each side and two red/orange spots on the hind end.

Dealing with browntail moth:

- Wear gloves, long-sleeved and -legged garments, and hats, and cover other areas of your body.
- Perform yard work after a rain or wet the area to keep browntail moth caterpillar hairs from getting airborne.
- Avoid swimming in water around browntail moth infestation, as the hair may float on the top of the water.

Visit the ChallengeME website:

Sign up for Health Coaching:

Call: TTY: 800.697.0353 | Online: guidanceresources.com

WellStarME: wellstar@mcd.org | 207-620-9202

Health & Wellness Navigation Team

wellnessnavigator@mcd.org | 207-620-9209

For benefits questions, please contact Employee Health & Wellness:

(207) 624-7380 or 1-800-422-4503 TTY: dial Maine Relay 711 or visit

maine.gov/mdot/challengeme

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MaineDOT Healthy Workforce

Coming up June: Sun and Heat Exposure

Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?
Please email Janice.Arsenault@maine.gov