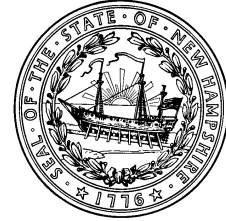


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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **DHHS Reminds People to Take Precautions against Mosquitoes and Ticks**

**Concord, NH** - The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is reminding citizens with start of the summer season and warmer weather to take precautions against begin bitten by mosquitoes and ticks.

Over the past few years, cases of West Nile virus (WNV) and eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) have been decreasing, but there is still a risk for these diseases here in New Hampshire. The number of cases of Lyme disease in the State, however, has been increasing in the last few years. EEE and WNV are transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Lyme disease and babesiosis are caused by the bite of an infected blacklegged (or deer) tick, which picks up the virus by biting an infected animal first.

“There have been and will continue to be cases of Lyme disease, EEE and WNV, though there is no way to know for sure how many,” said DPHS Director Dr. José Montero. “What we do know for certain is how to prevent these illnesses and this is through avoiding being bitten by ticks and mosquitoes.”

EEE is a serious disease that carries a high mortality rate for those who contract the serious encephalitis form of the illness. Symptoms may include high fever, severe headache, and sore throat. A stiff neck is also a symptom of the severe form of the disease, which can lead to seizures and coma. Symptoms usually occur 4 to 10 days after being bitten. For individuals who are bitten by a mosquito carrying West Nile virus, the risk of contracting the infection is low and in the overwhelming majority of cases, there are no symptoms or just mild, flu-like symptoms. At times, West Nile virus can causes meningitis and can be a serious threat to seniors, young children and those with compromised immune systems. If illness does occur, it typically happens within 3 to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The symptoms of Lyme disease include chills, fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, swollen glands, muscle or joint pain,

- more -

and sometimes a large circular, or bullseye, rash. Symptoms usually begin within a month of exposure but can range from 3 to 32 days.

DHHS is strongly urging residents of New Hampshire to take steps to prevent these illnesses. When in tick-infested areas (such as woods and grassy areas):

- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easy to see
- Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants
- Consider using an insect repellent. Products containing  $\geq 20\%$  DEET have been shown to be effective in repelling ticks. Clothes may be treated with Permethrin. Always follow manufacturer's instructions when applying repellents
- Check after every two or three hours of outdoor activity for ticks on clothing and skin
- A thorough check of body surfaces for attached ticks should be done at the end of the day
- Reduce the number of ticks around your home by keeping grass short, removing leaf litter, and creating a wood chips or gravel barrier where your lawn meets the woods.
- If a tick is attached to your skin for less than 24 hours, your chance of getting Lyme disease is extremely small. But just to be safe, monitor your health closely after a tick bite and be alert for any signs and symptoms of illness.

To prevent EEE and WNV from mosquito bites:

- If possible, stay inside between dusk and dark, when mosquitoes are most active.
- When outside between dusk and dark, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use an insect repellent with DEET according to manufacturer's directions when outside.
- Make sure windows have screens on them without holes.
- Eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed from your property, such as old tires, flower pots, and pool covers.

For more information about WNV, EEE, or Lyme disease, visit the DHHS website at [www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call the New Hampshire Communicable Disease Control and Surveillance Section at 603-271-4496.

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