

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Urges Caution During Tick Season**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Spring has arrived, and with the warmer weather comes the emergence of ticks, which can carry a variety of diseases. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) encourages all individuals to take precautions against tick bites when outdoors.

“The key to preventing tick-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, is to avoid tick bites and find and remove ticks promptly,” said Laura Cronquist, an epidemiologist with the NDDoH. “Areas that are heavily wooded or have tall grass or brush are more likely to be infested with ticks, especially between April and September, with the highest risk of disease transmission occurring during the warmer months.”

The NDDoH offers the following tips to help reduce the chance of ticks making contact with your skin:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent. To find EPA-registered products, go to [www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you](http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you). Always follow label directions.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing and gear such as boots, backpacks and tents.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make the ticks easier to see.
- Wear long pants, and tuck the legs into your socks or boots.
- Keep your shirt tucked in.
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Carefully examine gear and pets for ticks.
- Place clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.

“The best way to prevent tick bites is to avoid habitats where ticks can be found, or use repellent if tick-infested areas cannot be avoided,” Cronquist said. “It is also important to conduct a full-body tick check as soon possible. Use tweezers to remove ticks that have attached to your body.”

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According to Cronquist, the best way to remove a tick is to use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp it as closely to the skin's surface as possible and gently pull upward with steady, even pressure until it is free. Avoid twisting, jerking or crushing the tick during removal. Make sure to wash your hands and the site of tick attachment with soap and water after removal.

The most common symptoms of tick-borne diseases include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain. Early detection of tick-borne diseases is important to prevent potentially severe complications, so people should seek medical care if they develop symptoms suggestive of a tick-borne disease after spending time outdoors.

For more information on tick-borne diseases and tick bite prevention, contact Laura Cronquist at [lcronquist@nd.gov](mailto:lcronquist@nd.gov), 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180.

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