

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | April 15, 2019

## Take precautions to prevent tick bites

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recommends people take precautions against ticks and the diseases they carry.

“The highest risk of tickborne disease transmission occurs between late spring and early fall,” said Laura Cronquist, an epidemiologist with the NDDoH. “The key to preventing tickborne diseases, such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, is to avoid tick bites and find and remove ticks promptly.”

The NDDoH offers the following tips to help reduce the risk of tick bites:

- 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 to treat clothing and gear such as boots, backpacks, and tents.
- Talk with your veterinarian about using tick preventives on your pet.
- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with tall grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks.
- 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 most common symptoms of tickborne diseases include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain. Early detection of tickborne diseases is important to prevent potentially severe complications. Individuals should seek medical care if they develop symptoms suggestive of a tickborne disease after spending time outdoors.

The NDDoH is conducting tick surveillance again this year with the help of voluntary participants across the state. Ticks are submitted for identification and testing from April until November. This surveillance is important to help the NDDoH understand the types of ticks and tickborne diseases present in North Dakota.

During the 2018 tick surveillance season, most ticks collected were identified as American dog ticks, which can transmit tularemia and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Deer ticks, which can spread Lyme disease, babesiosis, Powassan virus, and other diseases, were submitted from 23 counties. One tick identified as a lone star tick was submitted from Cass County. Lone star ticks can transmit ehrlichiosis and tularemia. Additional information about the 2018 tick surveillance project can be found at [www.ndhealth.gov/disease/Tickborne/](http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease/Tickborne/).

For more information on tickborne 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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