



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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Tick Season Is Here - Protect Yourself Now from Lyme Disease

(Toms River, NJ) – As spring weather draws more people outdoors, the **Ocean County Health Department (OCHD)** is issuing an important reminder: the risk of Lyme disease is real - and rising.

“People enjoying their backyards, local parks, or hiking trails need to understand that Lyme disease isn’t just a nuisance—it can have serious, long-term health effects if not diagnosed and treated early,” said **Daniel Regenye, OCHD Public Health Coordinator/Health Officer**. “The blacklegged tick, or deer tick, is the only species in Ocean County known to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease - and it only takes one bite.”

Tick bites are deceptively easy to miss. In most cases, a **blacklegged tick** must be attached for at least 24 hours to transmit Lyme disease. That is why prompt, daily tick checks are critical, on both people and pets.

“Don’t wait for a rash or flu-like symptoms,” added Regenye. “Early detection and treatment can prevent the infection from spreading and causing serious complications to your joints, heart, and nervous system. Early antibiotic treatment is often highly effective.”

Know the Early Warning Signs of Lyme Disease:

- Bull’s-eye rash
- Fever
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches

The latest data from the **New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)** shows that Lyme disease remains a significant public health concern in the Garden State. In 2023, over 7,200 cases of Lyme disease were reported across New Jersey, underscoring the persistent risk posed by tick-borne illnesses.

Jennifer Bacchione, Ocean County Commissioner and Liaison to the Ocean County Board of Health, advises, “Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in the U.S., and New Jersey ranks among the top states for reported cases. The best defense is a good offense. Take prevention seriously before symptoms start.”

TICK SAFETY TIPS TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY:

- Treat gear and clothing with permethrin (0.5%) or buy pre-treated outdoor gear.
- Check clothing before coming indoors. Tumble-dry on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks.





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- Inspect pets and gear—ticks can hitch a ride on your dog, coat, or backpack.
- Shower promptly within two hours to wash off ticks and reduce risk.
- Perform a full-body tick check using a mirror. Focus on these areas:
 - Under arms
 - In/around ears
 - Inside the belly button
 - Behind knees
 - In/around hair
 - Between legs
 - Around the waist

How to remove a tick?

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/lyme.shtml>

[What to Do After a Tick Bite](#) | [Ticks](#) | [CDC](#)

Ocean County residents can bring their ticks to the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, located at 1623 Whitesville Road, Toms River, for identification. Call 732-349-1246 for more information.

For more information on Lyme disease and tick bite prevention, please visit the Ocean County Health Department website at oceancountyhealth.gov.

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