



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

St. Joseph County Department of Health

"To promote health and wellness with compassion and integrity through partnerships, education, protection, and advocacy for all who reside in and visit St. Joseph County"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Protect yourself from ticks – May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

As summer begins, the St. Joseph County Department of Health would like to remind residents to prioritize safety and avoid tick bites. May is Lyme Disease Awareness month, and St. Joseph County is a hotspot for Lyme Disease. Blacklegged ticks are more active during the warmer months (April to September), which is when they start to emerge and spread illness. These ticks not only carry Lyme Disease but can also transmit babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, and anaplasmosis.

Blacklegged ticks, also known as deer ticks, can be as small as a poppy seed during the summer months. It is important for everyone to take precautions before heading outdoors, while outside, and after returning indoors. Before going out, apply a CDC-approved insect repellent and minimize exposure of skin. While outdoors, stick to the center of trails and avoid grassy, brushy, or wooded areas whenever possible. After coming back indoors, promptly check your body for ticks. A hot shower can help wash off any unattached ticks. If you do find a tick on your skin, use fine-tipped tweezers to remove; pull straight up with steady, even pressure, while avoiding twisting or jerking. After removing the entire tick, wash the area with soap and water or rubbing alcohol. For full instructions on removing a tick, head to the Indiana Department of Health website at <https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/zoonotic-and-vectorborne-epidemiology-entomology/vector-borne-diseases/tick-borne-diseases/tick-bite-prevention/#How to remove an attached tick>. Don't forget to check your clothing and pets, as they may carry ticks inside. To better "Fight the Bite" and protect St. Joseph County residents against ticks, please take our tickborne illness and prevention survey at <https://redcap.link/dm9t8q6w>

Rising temperatures also signal the start of mosquito season, which brings risks such as West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, including Eastern Equine Encephalitis. CDC-approved repellents can protect you from both ticks and mosquitoes, so be sure to reapply them according to the product instructions. You can use CDC's insect repellent search tool at <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>

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