For Immediate Release
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SPRING SEASONAL TICK AWARENESS NOTICE

In light of last week’s Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order (EO 2020-21) directing Michiganders to stay in their homes, the Benzie Leelanau District Health Department is issuing a timely tick awareness notice.

Under Executive Order 2020-21, people are allowed to engage in outdoor activities like walking, hiking, running, cycling. As more people head outdoors to pass the time during the order, the risk of incidental human-tick interactions increases as well. Ticks begin to awake from dormancy with the arrival of spring and milder weather. More tick encounters may lead to an increase in tick-borne diseases such as Lyme Disease, Anaplasmosis, Ehrlichiosis and Babesiosis. An increase in tick-borne disease may increase the caseload of a health care system already preoccupied with battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help alleviate our local health care systems, the Benzie Leelanau District Health Department ask that individuals who enjoy nature and the outdoors during the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order take necessary precautions to prevent tick bites. Proper precautions include:

- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
- Wear clothing that has been treated with permethrin.
- Look for ticks on your body. See the image to the right for areas that ticks tend to bite.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after coming indoors.

Questions regarding ticks and other vectors in Benzie and Leelanau counties should be directed to the Benzie Leelanau District Health Department’s Environmental Health Division at 231-882-2105. Health related questions should be directed to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-648-6942.

Additional information regarding ticks and Lyme disease can be found here:

- [https://www.michigan.gov/lyme](https://www.michigan.gov/lyme)
- [https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548_54783_54784_78428_78430_83603---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548_54783_54784_78428_78430_83603---,00.html)
- [https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html)

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How to prevent tick bites when hiking and camping

Ticks can spread disease, including Lyme disease. Protect yourself:

- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
- Wear clothing that has been treated with permethrin.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after coming indoors.
- Look for ticks on your body. See the image to the right for areas that ticks tend to bite.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.

Feel for bumps and look for tiny brown spots, especially in these areas:

1. Scalp
2. Ears
3. Underarms
4. Belly Button
5. Waist & Back
6. Behind Knees
7. Pelvic Area
8. In Between Legs

How to remove a tick

1. If a tick is attached to you, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick at the surface of your skin.
2. Pull the tick straight up and out. Don’t twist or jerk the tick—this can cause the mouth parts to break off and stay in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth parts with tweezers if you can. If not, leave them alone and let your skin heal.
3. Clean the bite and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. You may get a small bump or redness that goes away in 1-2 days, like a mosquito bite. This is not a sign that you have Lyme disease.

Note: Do not put hot matches, nail polish, or petroleum jelly on the tick to try to make it pull away from your skin.

When to see your doctor

See a doctor if you develop a fever, a rash, severe fatigue, muscle or joint pain, or facial paralysis within 30 days of being bitten by a tick. Be sure to tell your doctor about your tick bite. If you have these symptoms and spent time outdoors where ticks may be found, it is important to get treatment right away.