



For Immediate Release:
Date: 3/24/26

OCHD URGES TICK SAFETY TO PREVENT LYME DISEASE

(Toms River, NJ) - As warmer weather approaches, the **Ocean County Health Department (OCHD)** is reminding residents to take proactive steps to protect themselves and their families from **Lyme disease** and other tick-borne illnesses.

Lyme disease remains the most commonly reported vector-borne illness in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 476,000 Americans are diagnosed and treated for Lyme disease each year. New Jersey consistently ranks among the states with the highest number of reported cases, with thousands of infections recorded annually. In 2025, Ocean County reported more than **570 cases** of Lyme Disease.

Ticks that transmit Lyme disease, particularly blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks), are commonly found in wooded, brushy, and grassy areas throughout Ocean County. These ticks are most active during the spring, summer, and early fall months.

“Awareness and prevention are critical when it comes to reducing the risk of Lyme disease,” said **Ocean County Commissioner Deputy Director Jennifer Bacchione**. “We encourage all residents to take simple, effective precautions when spending time outdoors to protect themselves and their loved ones.”

The Ocean County Health Department recommends the following preventive measures:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET or picaridin.
- Stay on cleared trails, avoid tall grass, and leaf litter.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and light-colored clothing to spot ticks more easily.
- Perform thorough tick checks after outdoor activities.
- Shower within two hours of coming indoors.
- Check pets regularly for ticks.

“Early detection is key,” said **Daniel Regenye, OCHD Public Health Coordinator**. “If you remove a tick promptly, your risk of contracting Lyme disease drops significantly. Residents should also watch for symptoms such as fever, fatigue, headache, and the characteristic bullseye rash.”

Regenye emphasized the importance of ongoing vigilance: “Tick prevention should be part of your daily routine during peak season. Simple habits like using repellent and checking your body after being outdoors can make a substantial difference.”

If you develop symptoms consistent with Lyme disease, contact your healthcare provider





promptly. Early treatment with antibiotics is highly effective and can prevent more serious complications.

Residents can contact **the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County** at 732-349-1246 for information about free tick identification.

For more information, visit the Ocean County Health Department website at **oceancountyhealth.gov**.