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Lyme Disease Awareness Month: Don't Let a Tick Make You Sick

With warmer weather on its way, Maine's ticks are coming out to play. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month (LDAM) and the Maine CDC reminds everyone to protect themselves from tickborne diseases.

The LDAM theme this year is "Don't Let a Tick Make You Sick." Make tick bite prevention a habit every day by taking these steps:

- **T: Take** and use an EPA-approved repellent. Use DEET, picaridin, IR3535 (Ethyl butylacetylaminopropionate), or oil of lemon eucalyptus on skin. Use permethrin on clothing only.
- **I: Inspect** your whole body for ticks daily and after outdoor activities. Check family members and pets too.
- **C: Cover** your skin with light-colored long sleeve shirts and pants. Tuck pants into socks.
- **K: Know** when you are in tick habitat and take precautions in areas where ticks may live.
- **S: Shower** when you get home to remove crawling ticks. Put clothes in the dryer on high heat for 15 minutes before washing to kill ticks on clothes.

If You Get a Tick Bite:

Step 1: Remove the tick quickly. Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers. Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick.

Step 2: Check for symptoms. Look for symptoms for up to 30 days after a tick bite. Early symptoms include:

- Fever and chills
- Feeling very tired
- Muscle or joint soreness
- Headache
- Bullseye rash. This is a non-itchy rash that slowly expands in size. This rash can show up anywhere on your body, not just where the tick bit you. Make sure to check all over your body.

Step 3: Call a health care provider. If you see a bullseye rash or start to feel any of these symptoms, talk to a health care provider. Make sure to mention any recent tick bites or time spent in tick habitat.

For more information on tickborne diseases, visit www.maine.gov/dhhs/vectorborne.