



Press Release

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Contact: ccdphmedia@cookcountyhhs.org

Public health officials caution residents against tickborne diseases.

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials are encouraging suburban Cook County residents to prevent tick bites while outdoors enjoying the warmer weather. Ticks are found in and near wooded areas, tall grass and brush. Infected ticks can transmit diseases including Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tularemia and Lyme disease through their bites.

“Last year there were 33 cases of Lyme disease in suburban Cook County,” said CCDPH chief operating officer Terry Mason, MD, FACS. “Tickborne diseases can cause mild symptoms, severe infections requiring hospitalization and even death. Avoiding tick bites takes a few precautions and protects residents when enjoying their neighborhood and the many Forest Preserves in suburban Cook County.”

To avoid tick bites:

- Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you.
- Use repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin. Always follow product instructions.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants (especially the cuffs), socks and tents. Or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Tuck long pants into your socks and boots. Wearing light-colored pants makes ticks easier to see.
- In heavily wooded areas or in tall grass and brush, check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks (especially ears, hair, neck, legs and between the toes).
- If you let your pets outdoors, check them often for ticks. Ticks can “hitch a ride” on your pets, but fall off in your home before they feed.

If you find a tick, on yourself, others or pets, remove it promptly. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with fine-point tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick. Wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water and apply an antiseptic to the bite site.

Within two weeks following a tick bite, if you experience a rash that looks like a bull’s-eye or a rash anywhere on your body, or an unexplained illness accompanied by fever following, call your doctor. The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses can include fever, chills, aches and pains, and rash. Early recognition and treatment of the infection decreases the risk of serious complications.

For the most current information, please visit www.cookcountypublichealth.org, Facebook/[ccdph](https://www.facebook.com/ccdph) and Twitter/[@cookcohealth](https://twitter.com/cookcohealth).

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