



PRESS RELEASE
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DHHS Releases New Lyme Disease Data

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is releasing the report “New Hampshire Tick-Borne Disease Bulletin: 2007 Update.” The report details diseases carried by ticks, specifically the black-legged (or deer) tick, in New Hampshire and the incidence of Lyme disease in the State in 2007.

“We have reported earlier that the incidence of Lyme disease in New Hampshire is increasing,” said Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas, “but the surprising finding is how pervasive the disease is. Over fifty percent of the ticks sampled in Rockingham, Strafford, and Hillsborough counties tested positive for Lyme disease.”

There were 892 cases of Lyme identified in the State in 2007, and 619 the year before. While the number of reported cases of Lyme disease in New Hampshire residents is increasing, it is not known whether this is because of an increased number of ticks carrying the disease or a heightened awareness among patients and clinicians or both. Early symptoms of Lyme disease often, but not always, include a large circular rash at the site of the tick bite, accompanied by chills, fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, swollen glands, and joint pain.

“Black-legged ticks can also carry and transmit two other diseases, babesiosis and anaplasmosis, to people in the State,” said Dr. José Montero, State Epidemiologist, “but it is important to remember that these three illnesses are all preventable by avoiding being bitten by ticks. We don’t want to discourage anyone from enjoying the outdoors, but just to take precautions when outside.”

To prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick-infested areas such as overgrown grass and brush and leaf litter
- Use insect repellent
- Wear protective clothing
- Do a tick check after being outdoors
- Reduce ticks around your home by keeping grass short and removing leaf litter
- Monitor yourself if you are bitten by a tick and tell your healthcare provider if you develop any symptoms.

Lyme disease is one of the topics DHHS is focusing on this week in recognition of National Public Health Week. For more information about Lyme disease, visit the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For more information about National Public Health Week go to www.nphw.org.