

NEWS RELEASE
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Protect yourself from tick-borne diseases this summer

(Lawrence, KS) – Tick season peaks at the height of summer's heat and so do the occurrence of tick-borne diseases. Lawrence and Douglas County residents can protect themselves from tick-borne illnesses such as Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever by following a few simple steps.

“The first step in preventing tick-borne disease is to know that disease-transmitting ticks exist in eastern Kansas,” said Kim Ens, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Disease Control Program Coordinator. “The best defense against these diseases is to protect against tick bites.”

If you find a tick on your body, Ens suggests jotting down the date it was discovered. If symptoms such as a rash, fever, headache, joint or muscle pains or swollen lymph nodes appear within 30 days, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

Ticks do not jump or fly onto humans, but wait on low vegetation and attach themselves to hosts (mice, deer, humans) as they walk by. It takes at least 24 hours for most tick-borne infections to be transmitted once the tick has attached. Therefore, finding and removing all ticks in a timely manner is critical to preventing illness.

The following steps will help protect against tick-borne disease:

- Avoid tick-infested areas such as tall grass and dense vegetation.
- Walk in the center of mowed trails to avoid brushing against vegetation.
- Keep grass cut and underbrush thinned in yards.
- Check yourself and pets for ticks after spending time outside.
- Use repellent on exposed skin when spending time outdoors. For more information on their use, see www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/RepellentUpdates.htm.

- When spending time outside, wear light-colored clothing so that ticks are easier to see and remove.
- Tuck pant legs into socks and boots. Wear long-sleeved shirts buttoned at the wrist. Tuck shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of clothing.

For more information on tick-borne diseases call the Health Department at (785) 843-3060 or see the following link at:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list_tickborne.htm.

-30-

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