

State Fire Administrator, Jim Burns, Cautions Firefighters to Take Precautions Against Ticks

State Fire Administrator, Jim Burns, advises all firefighters to be aware that exposure to ticks during wildland firefighting operations is a real concern. The information posted by the New York State Department of Health should be followed by all firefighters engaged in wildland firefighting operations. Tick-borne diseases, particularly Lyme Disease, may have a severe impact on firefighter's health. Additionally, ticks may be picked up on clothing and transported to the individuals firefighter's homes. This is one instance where we should not be bringing our work home with us!

State Health Department Urges New Yorkers to Take Precautions to Avoid Tick Bites

State Health dept urges New Yorkers to take precautions to avoid tick bites [Apr 26 Albany NY]--State Health Commissioner Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., today reminded all New Yorkers to take precautions from now through the fall season to protect themselves against potential tick-borne diseases that may cause chronic health conditions, such as Lyme disease.

The State Health Department's "Be Tick Free" education campaign was developed in coordination with local health departments in counties where the report of ticks and Lyme disease cases are most prevalent.

The Department's "Be Tick Free" logo is displayed across New York State on trail markers, billboards and bus placards, as well as on local television public service announcements. The Department is also providing updated educational and awareness brochures on Lyme disease prevention and stickers containing the logo to counties to assist them in their public outreach efforts in the communities they serve.

Since Lyme disease first became a reportable disease in 1986, over 68,000 cases have been reported to New York State. In 2005 alone, the Department received more than 5,000 reports of Lyme disease cases statewide.

Lyme disease is caused by the bite of an infected deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*). Ticks are active when the weather stays above freezing, usually from April through November. In tick infested areas, any contact with vegetation, even playing in the yard, can result in exposure to ticks.

The following precautions are recommended to help avoid tick bites:

- * When in tick-infested habitat-wooded and grassy areas, wear light-colored clothing (to spot ticks) and tuck pants into socks and shirt into pants.
- * After every two to three hours outdoors, check for ticks on clothing or skin. Brush off any ticks on clothing before they can attach to your skin. Also, check your children and pets for ticks.
- * Do a thorough tick-check of your entire body at the end of the day. Pay particular attention to the back of the knees, behind the ears, the scalp, the armpits and your back.
- * Removing a tick within 36 hours after it begins feeding, reduces your risk of infection. To remove a tick: Use tweezers, grasping the tick near the mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible. Don't squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick, which may contain infectious fluids. Pull the tick in a steady, upward motion away from the skin.
- * After removing the tick, disinfect the bite site with soap, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. Wash your hands carefully. Record the date and location of the tick bite. If a rash appears or you experience flu-like symptoms over the next 30 days, contact your health care provider immediately.
- * If you decide to use tick repellent, apply carefully following label directions.
- * Children may be at greater risk for reactions to repellents, in part, because their exposure may be greater. Do not apply repellents directly to children. Apply to your own hands and then put it on the child. Never apply to the hands of small children.
- * No one should apply repellents near eyes, nose or mouth and use sparingly around ears.

Tick repellents may contain the active ingredients DEET, permethrin, or certain botanical oils. Products containing permethrin should be applied to clothing (not skin), and the clothing should be treated before it is put on the body. Be sure to always read and carefully follow the instructions on the repellent product label. Do not assume that repellents will provide complete protection from ticks, and follow all of the above recommendations to help avoid tick bites.

Please contact your local health department or visit the State Health Department's website at:

<http://www.nyhealth.gov>

for more information about the use of repellents, how to do a tick check, how to remove a tick, and the symptoms of tick-borne diseases.



New York State Department of State
Office of Fire Prevention and Control
41 State Street
Albany, NY 12231-0001

- phone: (518) 474-6746
- fax: (518) 474-3240
- fire@dos.state.ny.us
- <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/firewww.html>