



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

Senator Farley Reminds Constituents to Protect Against Lyme Disease -- May Is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

HUGH T. FARLEY April 29, 2009

As nicer weather arrives and people spend more time outdoors, State Senator Hugh T. Farley (R, C - Schenectady) reminds constituents to guard against Lyme Disease.

"People are at moderate risk of suffering a tick bite during April, and the risks get higher in May through September," Senator Farley said.

Lyme Disease is an infection caused by a corkscrew shaped bacteria called a spirochete. Ticks carry the Lyme Disease spirochete, and infection occurs after a tick bite. The species of tick responsible for transmitting this disease in New York is the deer tick. These ticks are born uninfected, but acquire the infection after feeding on an infected animal, usually a mouse or other small mammal, Senator Farley said. The tick's preferred habitats are wooded areas.

Lyme disease is often hard to diagnose because it can have various symptoms that are seen in other illnesses. Health officials say in 60 to 80 percent of the cases, the victim develops a red rash within a few days to a few weeks after being bitten. Depending on the type of tick-borne infection a person has, a specific antibiotic will be given, Senator Farley reported. Early diagnosis and treatment is critical in preventing a serious later-stage disease and potentially chronic illness.

Senator Farley said to help prevent tick bites, hikers should stay on the center of trails and try not to brush up against vegetation, if possible. Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, and tuck the legs into socks or boots to help keep ticks from reaching the skin, the Senator added.

For more information, call the Tick-Borne Disease Institute/ Arthropod-Borne Disease Program at 474-4568. Senator Farley also has a brochure that highlights Lyme Disease prevention and detection. To obtain a free copy, call his office at 455-2181 (Albany), 843-2188 (Amsterdam), or 762-3733 (Johnstown).