



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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As Summer Continues, Take Charge Against Ticks

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Across our region, the sun and warmth are providing people with plenty of reasons to head outside and enjoy the weather. From fishing and boating to hiking and camping, there is no shortage of fun things to do outdoors in our region.

However, with increased time spent outside comes a higher chance that you will encounter disease-carrying insects, namely ticks. Ticks are tiny insects that can spread Lyme disease. They live in shady, moist areas at ground level and cling to tall grass, shrubs and brush. They can also be found living in gardens and lawns—especially those along the edges of wooded areas. Once a tick gets on skin, it typically climbs until it reaches a protected area of your

body, such as under clothing.

If you are spending time outdoors, please be sure to keep the following in mind to protect yourself from ticks:

- Wear light colored clothing that will allow you to spot ticks more easily;
- Wear enclosed shoes and be sure to tuck in your shirt and even your pants into your socks or shoes;
- Check exposed skin frequently;
- Avoid dense, wooded and bushy areas;
- Upon returning indoors, do a full check of your body for ticks and consider taking a bath or shower to find any ticks that may have gotten underneath your clothing;
- If you discover a tick on your clothes, put them in the dryer and tumble them on high heat for 10 minutes; and
- If you find a tick on your body, remove it from its head area and then monitor that area of skin for a rash to potentially appear.

Every year, New York sees roughly 8,000 cases of Lyme, according to the New York State Department of Health. Early symptoms of Lyme are similar to the flu, and include head and body aches, fevers, chills and joint pain. Approximately half the people infected with the Lyme bacteria will see a circular rash that grows outward from a center point. If caught early, it can be treated with antibiotics. However, if left untreated it can cause serious health problems.

Summertime is all about being outdoors. As you do so, I hope you will keep the above tips in mind to protect yourself and your loved ones from ticks.