



Dear Friend:

With the warmer weather now here, everyone wants to be outdoors. So once again, it's time for a short health reminder regarding sunscreen, deer ticks and Lyme disease, the best methods for eliminating mosquitoes near your home, as well as ways to help protect against diseases transmitted by insects. With a few simple precautions and a watchful eye, you and your family can feel free to hike, fish, camp, boat, go to the beach or just enjoy a backyard barbecue.

I hope you find this brochure useful and if you have any questions or concerns on any of this information, please don't hesitate to contact my office. Have a safe, fun and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

Jose Peralta
13th Senate District

SUN PROTECTION

Whether working in the garden, mowing the lawn, or swimming at the beach, it's easy to forget the dangers of prolonged exposure to the sun. Most people wear sunscreen when participating in outdoor activities in the summer; however, experts recommend using sunscreen on a daily basis. Broad spectrum sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher are suggested to protect against harmful burns, which can contribute to skin cancer. Make sure to apply sunscreen 15-20 minutes before being exposed to the sun, as this maximizes the effectiveness of the sunscreen. Always drink plenty of liquids, whether working or playing, and it's never a bad idea to wear a hat to keep the sun off your face. The summer is a great time to enjoy the sunshine, but remember, there can be too much of a good thing.

If you and your family are looking for additional information about the diseases mentioned in this brochure, you can contact the New York State Health Department at:

**New York State Health Department Bureau
of Communicable Disease Control
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237**

visit the Health Department online at:

www.health.ny.gov

or call

**Senator Peralta at:
(718) 205-3881**

New York State Senate
Albany, NY 1224

**FROM
STATE SENATOR
JOSE PERALTA
13th Senate District**



District Office:

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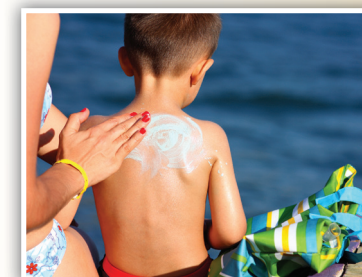
Albany Office:

415 Legislative Office Bldg.
Albany, NY 12247
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Summer Health Tips

*Information Regarding
Sun Protection, Lyme Disease,
West Nile Virus & Eastern
Equine Encephalitis*



Courtesy of
**SENATOR
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MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

West Nile Virus (WNV) & Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) information provided by the New York State Health Department: www.health.ny.gov.

Mosquitoes usually are considered a nuisance pest, but occasionally they can transmit viruses to people and some animals. These viruses can cause illness and even death. While your chances of being infected with a disease through a mosquito bite are very rare, there are simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is very rare but serious. Although only five cases have been reported since 1971, all were fatal and three of the five have occurred recently. Mosquitoes carrying EEE can infect people, horses and other mammals, some birds, reptiles and amphibians. The risk of getting EEE is highest from late July through September. People at the greatest risk of developing a severe case of the disease are those over 50 years of age and younger than 15 years of age.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is also transmitted to humans and some animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. West Nile Virus was first found in New York State in 1999. Most people infected with EEE or WNV do not develop any signs or symptoms. If illness develops, symptoms usually occur 3-14 days after the bite from an infected mosquito. Symptoms of EEE and WNV can be similar, but EEE is a much more serious illness in people and is much more

likely to result in death. People with mild cases of mosquito-borne disease may develop fever, headache, body aches and occasionally a skin rash or swollen glands (lymph nodes).

People with severe cases of EEE or WNV usually have a sudden onset of headache, high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, altered mental status, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or the membranes of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) or coma.

There is no specific treatment available for EEE or WNV. Antibiotics do not treat viral infections. Patients are treated for their symptoms and provided supportive therapy. People with mild cases of EEE and WNV usually recover completely. In cases of severe disease, supportive therapy may include hospitalization, respiratory support, IV fluids and treatment of other infections that develop. About one third of patients who develop EEE die and many of those who survive have mild to severe brain damage for the rest of their lives. Of the less than 1 in 150 people with severe WNV disease, death is very rare and almost all patients recover completely. There are no human vaccines for EEE or WNV. Prevention of mosquito bites is the most important way to reduce your risk of mosquito-borne diseases. Take the following steps to protect yourself:

- **Cover your skin as completely as possible when outside when mosquitoes are present and active. Wear long sleeves, pants and socks.**



- **Use insect repellent on exposed skin and follow label directions.**
- **Make sure there are screens in your home's windows and doors. Make sure the screens are free of rips, tears and holes.**
- **Eliminate all standing water around your home and property where mosquitoes can breed.**

LYME DISEASE

Protect Yourself Outdoors

Lyme disease is an infection resulting from the bite of a certain species of tick, primarily the deer tick. The deer tick is black and very small, about the size of a sesame seed.

These ticks are found throughout New York State, inhabiting woods, brush and fields. Humans contract Lyme disease when the infection goes undetected and develops into much more serious health problems. Early detection is very important! The presence of Lyme disease is usually noticed well after the bite. Within a few days, or even weeks, a distinctive red "bull's eye" rash appears, which is at least two inches in diameter. A variety of flu-like symptoms may then ensue, including headaches, fatigue, pain in the knees and joints, fever and chills. The symptoms will subside without medication, but the disease remains active and can potentially worsen into meningitis, encephalitis, facial palsy, heart problems, and later, arthritis.



The longer the time between infection and treatment, the more difficult the disease is to remedy.

Generally, ticks do not fly or jump onto their victims but prefer to wait on vegetation and cling to humans or animals as they brush past. While there is no fool-proof method of avoiding ticks when in an infested area, there are several steps you and your family can take to reduce your risks. These include:

- **Staying to the center of trails and paths and not brushing against vegetation if you can help it.**
- **Wearing long pants and long sleeved shirts. Also, tucking the legs of your pants into socks or boots. All this helps prevent ticks from reaching your skin.**
- **Wearing light colored or tightly woven clothing so it's easier to see ticks.**
- **Using an insect repellent, but sparingly and with caution, especially regarding repellents containing DEET. Follow all label instructions carefully.**
- **Checking yourself, your children and your pets frequently, as the tick's bite isn't painful and the tick in most cases drops off before anyone notices its presence.**

People are at a low risk of a tick bite from November to March; a moderate risk during April and October; and at a high risk from May through September.

