

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

85 Civic Center Plaza – Suite 106 - Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Phone: (845) 486-3400 Fax: (845) 486-3447

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For Further Information:

A. K. Vaidian, MD, MPH, Commissioner (845) 486-3432

NEWS RELEASE: May is Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month

Poughkeepsie ... Spring has finally come to the Hudson Valley, and as we emerge to enjoy the warmer weather outdoors, unfortunately so do the ticks. May's arrival marks the beginning of the high-risk season for tick bites and tick-borne disease. To prevent tick bites, you will need increased vigilance and attention to prevention practices.

"Lyme Disease is spread by the bite of an infected tick," said A. K. Vaidian, MD, MPH, Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral & Community Health. "Remember, ticks don't fly or jump, rather they lie in wait in areas of low-lying vegetation ready to attach to a passing human or animal. When there is a choice, avoid walking through places ticks typically inhabit: leaf litter, brush, and high grass. When hiking, remember to always walk in the center of the trail."

To reduce the risk of tick bites when venturing outside, wear clothing treated with permethrin and use EPA-registered repellents. It is important to follow label directions carefully. Check for ticks as soon as possible after coming indoors, and at least once a day. Family pets also need protection. Use veterinarian-recommended tick repellents for indoor/outdoor pets, such as the Seresto collar.

Prompt removal of any ticks that are found attached to a person or a pet decreases the risk of disease transmission. Remove attached ticks by using fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close as possible to where it is attached to the skin and pull straight out. To view a video demonstrating proper tick removal as well as other important tick-borne disease prevention information, visit DutchessNY.gov/BeTickFree.

"Be proactive. If you experience signs of tick-borne disease, such as a flat circular or oval expanding rash or flu-like symptoms, even if you think you have not been bitten by a tick, notify your doctor immediately," said Dr. Vaidian. "Recovery is most likely to be swift and complete with early detection and proper treatment."

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