

CLIFTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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CLIFTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMINDS RESIDENTS TO BE MINDFUL OF MOSQUITOS AND TICKS

For Immediate Release

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The Clifton Health Department would like to remind residents to continue to be mindful of ticks and mosquitos this summer season. Both ticks and mosquitos are capable of transmitting diseases.

Tick-borne diseases are illnesses that can be spread to humans by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks become infected when feeding on small infected mammals such as white-footed mice and voles. An infected tick can then infect a person through a tick bite. People who spend much of their time outdoors, particularly in wooded or grassy areas, between the months of April to September have a greater risk of becoming infected. Ticks often hide out in plants and wait for the opportunity to quest onto individuals or animals that pass by, which involves outstretching their first two pairs of legs and latching on as they brush against them.

The most common ticks in New Jersey that have the potential to spread disease to humans include the black-legged “deer” tick, which can transmit Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Powassan disease; the American dog tick which can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia; and the Lone Star tick, which can transmit ehrlichiosis and tularemia. Common symptoms of these tick-borne diseases include: a skin rash, fatigue, fever/chills, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, joint pain, and dizziness. Residents are encouraged to take the following steps to reduce their risk of exposure to ticks and tick-borne diseases:

- Know where ticks hide, which tend to be in or near wooded or grassy areas; always walk in the center of trails to avoid contact with ticks
- Keep your yard clean by mowing lawns, clearing brush, and removing leaf litter
- Apply insecticides: use EPA-registered repellent with DEET on skin and permethrin on clothing, boots, and camping gear

- Cover up by wearing long sleeves and pants tucked into socks to prevent ticks from getting under clothes
- Inspect your body for ticks. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of the body. Be sure to check the following parts of your body: under the arms, in/around the ears, inside the belly button, back of the knees, in/around the hair, between the legs, around the waist, and on the scalp

If you do find a tick on your body, use the following steps to ensure safe removal of the tick:

- Using fine-tipped tweezers, grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Do not twist or jerk the tick, as this may cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin
- With a steady motion, gently pull straight up until all parts of the tick are removed
- After removing the tick, clean your skin with soap and warm water
- Contact a healthcare provider if you develop symptoms of tick-borne diseases
- DO NOT use petroleum jelly, hot matches, nail polish remover, or other folklore remedies to remove a tick

Mosquito-borne diseases are illnesses that can be spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. In New Jersey, the most common mosquito-borne diseases people can get from local mosquitos are West Nile Virus and Eastern equine encephalitis. Mosquitos become infected when they feed on birds or mammals carrying the disease. Infected mosquitos can then spread the disease to people and other animals such as horses.

Anyone can get a mosquito-borne illness, but people who spend more time outside have a higher risk of becoming infected. Most people infected with a mosquito-borne disease do not show any symptoms. Depending on the disease, if symptoms do appear, they tend to be mild. Mild symptoms may include: fever, chills, headache, joint pain, body aches, and a rash. However, symptoms can sometimes be severe, especially in older adults and people with weakened immune systems, and may include: high fever, stiff neck, seizures, confusion, paralysis, coma, heavy bleeding, and brain swelling. Residents are advised to take the following steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (para-menthane-diol) or 2-undecanone. Always follow the product label instructions
- Do not use insect repellent on children younger than 2 months of age. Do not use products with oil of lemon eucalyptus (para-menthane-diol) on children younger than 3 years
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Cover crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting
- After travel, take the necessary steps to avoid mosquito bites for 3 weeks. This helps to reduce the spread of new diseases to local New Jersey mosquitos which may then infect other people
- Mosquito-proof your home and yard by emptying or changing outdoor or standing water weekly to stop mosquito breeding, using window and door screens, being sure to repair any holes in the screens to keep mosquitos outside and use air conditioning when possible

The Clifton Health Department is a contractual health agency serving the Township of Little Falls.

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