



# *Municipality of Princeton*

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## **Prepare for 2015 Tick Season**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Princeton, NJ - June 4, 2015 – The Princeton Health Department is reminding residents the 2015 tick season is upon us and people should take precautions to prevent being bitten by ticks and potentially exposed to Lyme disease or other illnesses. In 2014, there were 42 cases of Lyme disease identified in Princeton and nearly 300,000 diagnosed in the United States.

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdoferi* and is transmitted to people by the bite of an infected black-legged tick (also known as the deer tick). The greatest risk for Lyme is between the months of May and August when the black-legged tick is in the juvenile stage; it's the size of a poppy seed and very difficult to detect, so individuals may be unaware they have been bitten. Ticks that transmit Lyme can also transmit other diseases, such as anaplasmosis and babesiosis. Although not as common as Lyme, both diseases can also cause illness.

"We cannot afford to let our guard down since we also know that a high proportion of ticks in Princeton and in New Jersey are infected with the Lyme spirochete. We would like everyone to consistently take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families from becoming ill from this and other tick-borne diseases. We know people can prevent tick bites through steps like using repellents and tick checks" said Jeffrey Grosser, M.H.S., HO, Health Officer for Princeton Health Department.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, fatigue, and often a skin rash that is round and/or looks like a bulls eye. 70% of patients will develop a rash within 30 days of a tick bite. Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics, but if left untreated can lead to severe headaches and neck pain caused by meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord), pain and swelling in the large joints, shooting pains that may interfere with sleep, and heart palpitations and dizziness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends taking the following precautions to prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick-infested areas such as overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter
- Use insect repellent labeled as effective against ticks
- Wear protective clothing (long pants and long sleeves to keep ticks off skin)
- Do tick checks on yourself and family members after being outdoors
- Reduce ticks around your home by keeping grass short and removing leaf litter
- Speak with your healthcare provider if you are bitten by a tick or if you notice a large round rash on you.

Additional information is available online at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/resources/DontletTicksbiteComicGenericFS\\_508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/resources/DontletTicksbiteComicGenericFS_508.pdf)

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/izdp/documents/tbd\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/izdp/documents/tbd_brochure.pdf)

**For more information, please contact the Princeton Health Department at (609) 497-7608**