



Orange County Government
Office of County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus
NEWS RELEASE

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**Neuhaus and Orange County Health Department recognize Lyme
Disease Awareness Month**

Lyme can have serious complications if it is not identified and treated early

Goshen, N.Y. – Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus and Health Commissioner Dr. Eli Avila are recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness Month, and encourage residents to protect themselves and their families while enjoying outdoor activities.

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month and also starts the beginning of tick season. Orange County has historically been a hot spot for Lyme disease cases. According to preliminary statistics from the State Department of Health, there were 564 confirmed or probable cases of Lyme disease in Orange County last year, compared to 694 in 2015.

“By taking precautions to avoid tick bites and checking yourself for ticks you can help yourself and your community,” Neuhaus said. “We want to ensure that residents are informed about ways to prevent being bitten by a tick and what to look for if you may have been bitten by one. The Orange County Department of Health and I will continue to do all we can to keep County residents healthy and free of Lyme disease.”

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria transmitted by the bite of a female deer tick. It can cause a wide range of symptoms, including muscle and nerve pain, and arthritis. As the disease progresses, it can cause facial palsy, short-term memory problems, even an irregular heartbeat. If you notice these signs or symptoms, consult a health care provider immediately.

The most noticeable early sign is a rash resembling a bullseye, or solid patch, which usually, but not always, develops between three and 30 days after the tick bite. The rash can expand over time and last for several weeks. In some cases, no rash appears. According to Avila, the rash does not normally itch or feel painful.

“Lyme disease can have serious complications if it is not identified and treated early,” Avila said. “It is important that a tick be removed as soon as it is discovered. If the tick is removed within 36 hours, the risk of Lyme disease can be greatly reduced.”

If you find a tick attached to your body, remove it by taking the following steps:

- Using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick near the mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible.
- Don't twist or jerk the tick, this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin.
- Pull the tick in a steady, upward motion away from the skin.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. Wash your hands carefully.

The Orange County Health Department can identify a tick to determine if it can transmit Lyme disease. Bring the entire tick in a plastic bag or small container to the Health Department office located at the 1887 County Building, 124 Main Street in Goshen. The Health Department can be reached at 291-2332 or orangecountygov.com/health.

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