TICK IDENTIFICATION and TESTING

PERSONAL PROTECTION

To reduce the annoyance of tick bites and prevent transmission of tick-borne diseases, a few commonsense measures should be followed. These include:

- Avoid time spent in tick infested habitats.
- Wear light colored clothing so that ticks can be spotted easily.
- Wear long pants and tuck the pant legs into your socks or boots; wear a long-sleeved shirt and tuck it into your pants. Tape the area where pants and socks meet so that ticks cannot crawl under clothing.
- Use insect repellents that contain 20-30% DEET or treat clothes (especially pants, socks, and shoes) with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact. As with all products, the user should follow the manufacturer’s usage recommendations.
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush along the trails edge.

Finally, inspect yourself carefully and remove any attached ticks. It takes a minimum of 24 hours of attachment before an infected tick can transmit the Lyme disease spirochete. Therefore, the quicker you remove ticks, the less likely they can transmit any disease causing organism.

For additional information on ticks and tick-borne diseases contact:

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Tick information and brochures are available online at: www.visitmonmouth.com/mosquito/tick.html
Tick engorgement level: If a tick is infected it may transmit that infection when it bites an individual. However transmission does not happen immediately. In the case of Lyme disease at least 24 hours is usually required before the tick will effectively transmit the pathogen. The engorgement level (flat, partially engorged, fully engorged) is a relative indication of how long the tick was attached. The longer a tick is attached, the more engorged (filled with blood) it becomes. The longer an infected tick is attached, the greater the risk that transmission will take place. So, risk increases with engorgement level.

All three of the most common ticks found in New Jersey are capable of transmitting diseases to humans and pets. There is no charge to Monmouth County Residents for identifying a tick.

Tick Testing
Ticks that have been successfully identified as Ixodes scapularis the black-legged tick (a.k.a. deer tick) can be tested for Borrelia burgdorferi, the causative agent of Lyme disease. The tick is tested using a DNA based technique known as Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). The tick can be tested whether it is alive or dead. There is a $25.00 fee to cover the cost of the test.

Tick infection status: If a tick is positive for infection with the Lyme disease organism (Borrelia burgdorferi), the potential risk for infection of that individual to have taken place is increased (but not confirmed).

Important Facts to Keep in Mind
Tick identification and test results do not represent the diagnosis of disease in humans or animals; they do provide information that may facilitate you and your health care provider in evaluating and making diagnostic/treatment decisions. The identification and analysis of a submitted tick does not rule out the possibility that you may have had other undetected tick bites. Actual clinical symptoms should never be discounted based on the tick identification and test results. The official written report of the tick identification and testing results is an important document and you may want to save it to include in your medical file for future reference. Currently only the black-legged tick (a.k.a. deer tick) will be tested for Borrelia burgdorferi the organism that causes Lyme disease. The black-legged tick is also able to transmit other diseases such as Babesiosis (Babesia microti) and Anaplasmosis (Anaplasma phagocytophilum), formerly known as human granulocytic ehrlichiosis.

Tick Removal
The best way to remove attached ticks is to grasp the tick with fine-tipped tweezers as close to the skin as possible; then pull straight up with a slow, steady force. Try to avoid crushing the tick or destroying it in any other way. Clean the area of tick attachment with an antiseptic. Removed ticks can be saved in any sealed container to be later identified or tested. Attached ticks should not be removed with noxious chemicals or by burning. This may cause injury to the skin, and can increase the risk of transmission, by causing the tick to regurgitate disease causing organisms into the body. Do not place ticks in tape. This makes identification and testing more difficult.

SUBMITTING A TICK
The Tick Identification and Testing Service is only available to the residents of Monmouth County. At this time all ticks must be submitted in person at the Monmouth County Mosquito Commission located in Tinton Falls (directions to the Commission are located on the back of this brochure). The identification of the tick is free but there is a $25.00 fee to cover the cost of testing the tick for the Lyme disease causing organism. We can only accept personal checks at this time, NO cash or credit cards. Payment is expected at the time the tick is submitted. Results of the Tick Identification and Testing will be conveyed by the telephone (a written report will be mailed or e-mailed for your records). Ticks can be submitted at the Mosquito Commission between the hours of 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM.