

**DATE:** June 5, 2018  
**TO:** DeKalb County News Media  
**FROM:** DeKalb County Health Department

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
***Avoiding Tick and Mosquito-borne Illness***

As warmer weather approaches, the DeKalb County Health Department is reminding the community to take precautions to avoid tick and mosquito-borne illnesses.

Ticks live in wooded areas, brushy fields, and around your home. Ticks can carry diseases such as Lyme disease and spotted fever.

Many tick-borne diseases have similar symptoms. The most common symptoms can include fever, chills, aches, pains, and a rash. Within two weeks following a tick bite, if you experience a rash that looks like a bull's-eye or a rash anywhere on your body, or an unexplained illness accompanied by fever, contact your doctor.

The most common mosquito-borne illness in Illinois is West Nile virus. West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. It is important to remember that not all mosquitoes carry West Nile virus – most do not. Mild cases of West Nile virus infections may cause a slight fever or headache. More severe infections are marked by a rapid onset of a high fever with head and body aches, disorientation, tremors, convulsions and, in the most severe cases, paralysis or death. People older than 50 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile Virus.

“There are ways to avoid tick and mosquito-borne illness, including wearing protective clothing and applying insect repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET or picaridin,” says Greg Maurice, Director of Health Protection at the DeKalb County Health Department.

Additional precautions you can take to repel mosquitoes is by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report:

**REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut.

**REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

**REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Additional information about [ticks](#) and [mosquitoes](#) can be found on the IDPH website.



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