



Pennsylvania  
Department of Health



Pennsylvania  
Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources



Pennsylvania  
Department of Environmental Protection

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Contact:** Mark O'Neill, DOH: [ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov](mailto:ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov)  
Wesley Robinson, DCNR: [werobinson@pa.gov](mailto:werobinson@pa.gov)  
Neil Shader, DEP: [ra-epnews@pa.gov](mailto:ra-epnews@pa.gov)

## **Shapiro Administration Highlights Lyme Disease and Tick Bite Prevention Best Practices at Memorial Lake State Park**

*Mosquitos can also carry a variety of diseases that could potentially make Pennsylvanians sick. Using insect repellents and wearing long sleeves and pants can help prevent mosquito bites.*

**Harrisburg, PA** — Representatives from the **Shapiro Administration's Departments of Health (DOH), Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and Environmental Protection (DEP)** visited Memorial Lake State Park in Dauphin County this afternoon to highlight the importance of residents taking precautions to prevent Lyme disease and tick bites.

"Spending time outdoors is an important way to support health and wellness, but we want to encourage Pennsylvanians to do so as safely as possible," said **Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. "It only takes a couple of minutes to reduce your risk of tick bites before you head outdoors and to check for ticks after coming back inside. A few simple steps can make a world of difference in protecting you from Lyme disease."

Pennsylvania typically ranks in the top 10 in the country for Lyme disease cases per 100,000 residents. Thus far, in 2024, the DOH has recorded 11,263 lab-confirmed cases of Lyme disease. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a short course of antibiotics. However, if the infection is left untreated, it can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.

Earlier this year, to better inform Pennsylvanians about tickborne diseases, the DOH launched a [new online dashboard](#) to show where ticks are prevalent and help them prepare to take appropriate precautions while enjoying outdoor activities.

"Taking preventative measures helps people enjoy mental and physical health benefits of being in the outdoors without having to worry, especially with regard to ticks," said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. "It is critical to be aware of the risks and be prepared when spending time outdoors year-round, whether that is visiting one of our 124 state parks, hiking our more than 2.2 million acres of state forestland, or enjoying one of the more than 6,000 local parks in your own backyard."

Residents should also take steps to prevent mosquito bites when enjoying Pennsylvania's great outdoors.

"Ticks and mosquitoes can ruin a great time outdoors, and it is important to take simple, commonsense steps to protect yourselves and your loved ones," said **DEP Deputy Secretary John Ryder**. "DEP monitors tick and mosquito populations across Pennsylvania, tracking the prevalence of diseases these insects can carry, and even taking steps to reduce mosquito populations when necessary. A little prevention goes a long way to staying safe from ticks and mosquitoes outdoors."

Residents can prevent mosquito bites by using insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus and by wearing long sleeves and pants, especially during peak mosquito activity times, like dusk and dawn.

Ticks aren't confined to the forests and wooded areas of our Commonwealth, and can be found in urban and rural settings too, usually in shrubs, weeds, leaf litter, and tall grasses - anywhere there is foliage. Taking the proper steps to decrease the chances of getting bitten is important.

### **TIPS FOR TICK BITE PREVENTION**

When outside, cover exposed skin, wear light colors to help detect ticks, and use insect repellent that is EPA-approved for tick prevention. Before spending time outdoors, spray permethrin on shoes, clothes, and gear.

After being outside, check yourself, your kids, and your pets thoroughly for ticks and remove any attached. Then, shower to help remove any ticks you may have missed. You can also throw your clothes in the dryer using high heat to help kill any remaining ticks.

The Shapiro Administration reminds Pennsylvanians of the health benefits of safely enjoying the outdoors, including:

- Improving cardiovascular health;
- Strengthening muscles and bones;
- Reducing chances of suffering chronic diseases;
- Reducing stress levels and improving mental health; and
- Becoming more socially connected.

For more information on Lyme disease, visit the Department of Health's [Tickborne Diseases webpage](#).

**Editor's Note:** Video downloads and photos from the news conference are [available on PAcast](#).

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