



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**May 24, 2016**  
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### **Searching for morels? Watch out for ticks too**

NORTHERN MICHIGAN – Children and adults in search of springtime morels may encounter something else that thrives in the north woods: Ticks. But while some ticks are known to transmit Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and a variety of other illnesses ranging from mild to serious, they are generally just a minor nuisance as long as proper precautions are taken, according to Dr. Joshua Meyerson of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

“Everyone should get out and explore the outdoors,” Dr. Meyerson said. “But whenever possible, avoid thick brush and other areas that are likely to harbor ticks. Insect repellents containing DEET are effective in repelling ticks, and permethrin can be used to treat clothing or tent fabric.” He also recommended showering within about two hours of being outdoors, and performing thorough head-to-toe checks for ticks – especially on children. “Finding a tick is not cause for alarm, but it should be removed as promptly and carefully as possible.”

If you do find a tick attached to the skin, use a pair of tweezers to remove it slowly, being careful not to twist or crush the tick. Gentle extraction helps to keep its mouthparts from breaking off under the skin. Because the tick is only about the size of a sesame seed, it can be hard to spot, especially in one’s scalp or areas usually hidden by clothing. A deer tick must remain attached for 24-48 hours to transmit Lyme Disease, so early detection and removal is important.

“The most common tick in Michigan is the American Dog Tick, which will attach to people and pets,” Dr. Meyerson noted. “However, it’s the much smaller blacklegged tick, or deer tick, that is responsible for transmitting Lyme Disease. The deer tick is only found in certain areas, but its range has been gradually expanding across the far western edge of the state, in the western U.P. and along the Lake Michigan shoreline.” Lyme Disease cases usually peak in June and July. For more information about tick activity, identification and testing, and Lyme Disease in Michigan, visit [www.michigan.gov/lyme](http://www.michigan.gov/lyme).

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.