

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DOH-WALTON ADVISES PUBLIC OF HEALTH CONCERNS OF TICK BITES**

*~Reduce Your Risk of Tick-Borne Diseases~*

**WALTON COUNTY**— The Florida Department of Health in Walton County (DOH-Walton) cautions the public to be aware of ticks while enjoying outside activities. Tick-borne diseases are illnesses that spread to humans from bites by infected ticks. Preventing tick bites is the best measure in eliminating the chance of contracting a tick-borne disease.

**People can take steps to prevent tick bites by:**

- Walk on cleared trails and stay in the center of the trail.
- Minimize contact with leaf litter, brush, overgrown grasses, where ticks are most likely to be found.
- Minimize the amount of exposed skin, by wearing socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when going into possible tick-infested areas.
- Wear light-colored clothing, to make it easier to see and remove ricks before they attach to skin.
- Apply repellents to skin and clothing. Follow the instructions on the product label.
- After outdoor activities, conduct full body tick checks and promptly remove any ticks that are found.
- Use tick prevention medicines, treatments and shampoos on pet dogs and cats routinely.
- Reduce possible tick habitats in yards by removing leaf litter, clear tall grasses and brush around homes, mow lawn frequently, keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees, discourage unwelcomed animals (deer, raccoons, stray dogs and cats, etc.) from entering your yard.

Remove ticks that are attached to the skin as soon as possible, preferably by using pointed, fine-tipped tweezers. Grab the tick's mouth parts close to the skin and slowly pull the tick straight out until the tick lets go.

Tick-borne diseases diagnosed in Florida include Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF), Ehrlichiosis, and Southern Tick Associated Rash Illness (STARI). Signs and symptoms begin within three to 30 days after a bite by an infected tick and may include some or all of the following:

- Fever
- Headache
- Rash
- Muscle pain
- Joint aches
- Chills
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain

- Lack of appetite
- Cough
- Redness around the eyes
- Fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Confusion

The symptoms vary from patient to patient and can be difficult to distinguish from other diseases. These infections can become quite severe if ignored and not treated quickly, and may require hospitalization or even fatal. If any fever, rash, or other symptoms of concern occur after a tick bite, seek medical attention from a healthcare provider immediately. Treatment is most effective if started early in the course of the disease. A timely antibiotic treatment is curative for most of the tick-borne illnesses present in Florida and the United States.

For more information about tick-borne diseases, please visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/tick-and-insect-borne-diseases/tick-information.html>.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

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