



Avoid Tick Bites to Prevent Anaplasmosis



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The ticks are out before winter sets in.

BURLINGTON –Vermont is on pace for its highest number of reported cases of anaplasmosis – a tickborne disease that is becoming more common in the state.

Anaplasmosis is transmitted by the black-legged tick, which is the same tick that spreads Lyme disease, and the most common tick found in Vermont. As of September, 133 cases of anaplasmosis have been reported, only six fewer than were reported for all of 2015.

Although anaplasmosis cases peak in the spring and summer, a second surge in illnesses occurs in the autumn. That is when adult ticks are hungry and looking for another blood meal before winter arrives.

"Anaplasmosis is a serious illness, and we're seeing more of it in Vermont," said Bradley Tompkins, infectious disease epidemiologist. According to Tompkins, over one-third of the anaplasmosis cases reported to the Health Department are sick enough to be hospitalized, compared to 3 percent for Lyme disease. Symptoms can include fever, headache, chills and muscle aches. Anaplasmosis can be successfully treated with antibiotics, especially if treatment is given early.

Tompkins urges people to not drop their guard just because summer is over. "Whether you're doing yard work, admiring the changing leaves, or heading out into the woods to hunt, it's important to take precautions to prevent tick bites"

What to do to avoid tick bites:

REPEL – Before you go outside, apply an EPA-registered insect repellent on your skin and treat your clothes with permethrin. When possible, wear light-colored long sleeved shirts and long pants, and tuck your pants into your socks to keep ticks from your skin.

INSPECT – Do daily tick checks on yourself, your children and pets.

REMOVE – Remove ticks right away. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has also been proven effective in washing ticks off the skin before they attach. Put clothing into the dryer on hot heat for 10 minutes to kill remaining ticks.

WATCH – If you were bitten by a tick, watch for signs of disease during the weeks following the bite. Early signs of anaplasmosis include fever, headache, chills and muscle aches, and usually occur within one to two weeks of a tick bite. Call your health care provider if you experience these symptoms.

Learn more about [anaplasmosis and other tickborne diseases](#)

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