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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Moore County Health Department Focuses on Prevention During Lyme Disease Awareness Month**

The Moore County Health Department urges Moore County residents to take proper precautions in preventing the spread of tick-borne illnesses, now that warm weather has arrived. "It is essential that our residents understand the health risks associated with tick bites as they venture outside to enjoy the warm weather," said Health Director Robert Wittmann. "By following several simple precautions, people can protect themselves and their families."

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that spreads when an infected blacklegged tick bites a person and remains attached for 36 hours or more. Ticks are typically active when the weather stays above freezing, usually from April to November. In the majority of cases, an expanding rash resembling a bull's eye or solid patch will appear near the site of the bite. If an expanding rash with a diameter of more than two inches appears or flu-like symptoms occur over a 30-day period following a tick bite, individuals should contact their health care provider immediately. Most cases of Lyme disease can be successfully treated with a few weeks of antibiotics. Tick bites in North Carolina can transmit diseases other than Lyme disease as well. Some of these are less common such as babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and anaplasmosis. These diseases vary in their severity, but all can cause serious illness and even death, if untreated.

Lyme and other tick-borne diseases are preventable by taking simple precautions. Anyone expecting to spend time in a grassy or wooded area should:

- Make sure shirts are tucked in and also tuck pants into socks to prevent ticks from accessing the skin.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants, when practical.
- Wear light colored clothing that will make it easier to spot and remove ticks.
- Check for ticks every two to three hours while outdoors, and brush off any ticks before they attach.
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks on your body.
- Perform a full body check multiple times during the day and at the end of the day to ensure that no ticks are attached.

***"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."***  
**<http://www.moirecountync.gov/health/>**

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If a tick is found on the body, it is critical to remove it immediately, preferably with fine point tweezers, grasping the tick close to its attachment to the skin. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. Dispose of a live tick either by submersing it in alcohol, by placing it in a sealed bag/container and wrapping it tightly in tape and disposing of it, or by flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

Individuals should also avoid folklore remedies such as "painting" the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. The goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible—not wait for it to detach.

For more information on tick-borne illness, visit the Moore County Health Department website at [www.moorecountync.gov/health](http://www.moorecountync.gov/health). For other news and updates, follow the Moore County Health Department on Facebook (MOCO Health) and Twitter (@mocohealth).

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