SUMMER SAFETY GUIDE

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Summer has arrived! It’s time to enjoy all that our beautiful region has to offer, from activities at the lake, walks on one of our many local trails, to picnics with your friends and family. Use this guide as a resource to stay healthy, well and safe all summer long. We cover what's biting you, safe food preparation, avoiding heat illnesses, and more. Read it cover-to-cover or section-by-section, and then hang it on your fridge for when you find that tick or are planning your picnic. Stay safe out there!

MOSQUITOES
More than an itch

There is more to worry about with mosquitoes than just an itchy bite—mosquitoes can spread diseases that can make you very sick. While mosquitoes can spread many different diseases, West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are more common in our region.

Most people infected with WNV or EEE will show no symptoms or only have a mild illness, but some people will get very sick. There are no human vaccines, specific treatments or medicines for these diseases, but you CAN protect yourself from mosquitoes. When used as directed, insect repellents are the BEST protection. For tips on protecting yourself and reducing mosquitoes around your home, flip to pages 5 and 6 of this guide.

How serious are WNV & EEE?
⇒ About 1 in 150 people with WNV will develop severe illness. Most people recover completely from even severe WNV.
⇒ About 1 in 3 people who develop symptoms of EEE will die of the illness, and of those who survive, many have lifelong to severe brain damage.

West Nile Virus (WNV)
• Symptoms may appear 3-14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.
• Mild symptoms: fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting. Sometimes, swollen lymph nodes or a skin rash on the chest, stomach or back are seen.
• Severe symptoms: high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop symptoms of severe WNV.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)
• Symptoms may appear 4-10 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.
• Severe cases begin with headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may progress into disorientation, seizures or coma.
Ticks can also spread diseases that can make you very sick. Lyme disease, carried by the deer (black-legged) tick, is the most common disease spread by ticks in our region. For more information on Lyme disease and other diseases spread by ticks, flip to page 4 of this guide.

Deer ticks are found most often in shady, moist areas at ground level. They cling to tall grass, brush and shrubs, usually no more than 18-24 inches off the ground. They also live in lawns and gardens, especially at the edges of woods and around old stone walls. Turn to page 6 for tips on reducing the number of ticks around your home.

Deer ticks can’t jump or fly, and don’t drop onto passing people or animals. So how do they get on you? Through direct contact, such as when your leg brushes up against grass. Once a tick gets on the skin, it will usually climb upwards until it reaches a hiding spot.

**Spotting a tick**

- Ticks often hide in the armpit, groin, hair, or behind the knees.
- Daily tick checks are an important step to keep you and your family healthy. Turn to page 5 for more tips on preventing tick bites.
- Young deer ticks, called nymphs, are brown and the size of poppy seeds (~1 mm).
- Adult female deer ticks are red and black, while males are black. Adult deer ticks are about the size of a sesame seed (~3-4 mm).

**Found a Tick? Don’t Panic.**

1. **Not all ticks are infected.** Your risk of Lyme disease decreases if the tick is removed within the first 24-36 hours.
2. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick at the surface of your skin.
3. Pull the tick straight up and out. Don’t twist or jerk the tick—this can cause the mouth parts to break off and stay in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth parts with tweezers, if you can. If not, leave them alone and let your skin heal.
4. Clean the bite and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. You may get a small bump or redness that goes away in 1 - 2 days, like a mosquito bite. This is not a sign that you have Lyme disease.
5. Call your doctor if you have a fever, get a rash, are very tired, or have joint pain within 30 days of a tick bite.

**NOTE:** Do not put hot matches, nail polish, or petroleum jelly on the tick to try to make it pull away from your skin.
**A Little on Lyme Disease**

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by the bite of an infected deer tick. It is the most common disease spread by ticks in our region. Untreated, Lyme disease can result in health problems. Patients treated with antibiotics in the early stage of the infection usually recover quickly and completely. Early symptoms of Lyme disease may be mild and easily missed.

⇒ **Call your doctor** if you develop any of the following within **30 days of a tick bite**:
  - fever or chills,
  - headache,
  - rash,
  - severe fatigue,
  - muscle or joint pain,
  - swollen glands (lymph nodes).

⇒ **If a rash occurs**, it is usually at the site of the tick bite and is a “bulls-eye” circular patch or solid red patch that grows larger. The rash typically isn’t painful or itchy, and may or may not warm to the touch.

⇒ **Treatment** includes antibiotics, often for 2 - 3 weeks. Without treatment, you may develop severe arthritis and problems with nerves, spinal cord, brain or heart.

⇒ **Allow yourself plenty of rest**. You may feel tired while you are recovering, even though the infection is cured.

⇒ **Some people wonder** if there is a test to confirm that they are cured. Your body remembers an infection long after it has cleared, so additional blood tests might be positive for months or years. This doesn’t mean you are still infected.

Don’t forget to tell your doctor about your tick bite!

### Tick-related Illnesses in Clinton County

<table>
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<th>Number of cases by year</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babesiosis</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyme disease</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other diseases spread by ticks

A few of the other serious diseases spread by ticks include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis and Powassan virus. These diseases are less common but still a concern.

The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses include:
  - fever and/ or chills,
  - aches and pains, and
  - rash.

Read more on preventing tick bites on page 5.
TICKS & MOSQUITOES

Prevent the bite

Take a few easy steps to prevent bites from ticks and mosquitoes to lower your chances of getting sick from tick- or mosquito-borne diseases. Prevention is your best defense!

Before you go outdoors:

- **Apply an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent** that contains 20-30% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or 2-undecanone.
- **Cover your skin as much as possible.** Wear enclosed shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.
- **Wear light-colored clothing with a tight weave** to spot ticks easily.
- **Treat clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents) with permethrin** or purchase permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings; see product information for details. If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully. Do NOT use permethrin products intended to treat clothing, directly on skin.
- **Cover baby carriers and strollers with mosquito netting.**

After spending time outdoors:

- **Look for ticks on your body.** Use a mirror to view all parts of your body.
- **Take a shower** as soon as you can to wash away unattached ticks.
- **Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat** for at least 10 minutes up to 60 minutes to kill any ticks. The clothes should be warm and completely dry. If clothing is washed first, use hot water.

Hide & seek!

Ticks often hide in and around the:
- hair
- ears
- armpits
- belly button
- waist
- groin

Don’t forget to check your pets for ticks, especially after they spend time outdoors!

Using insect repellent safely

- Always follow the product label instructions.
- Reapply insect repellent as directed, usually every few hours depending on which product and strength you choose.
- Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
- If you are using sunscreen, **apply sunscreen first** and insect repellent second.
- Store out of the reach of children. Do not allow children to apply repellents themselves.
- Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
- When applying repellents to children, apply to your own hands and then put it on the child. Avoid the child’s hands, as repellent may end up in their eyes or mouth.

The effectiveness of non-EPA-registered insect repellents, including some natural repellents, is not known. EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Visit [www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you](http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you) and use EPA’s helpful search tool to find the product that best suits your needs.
**REDOUCING MOSQUITOES & TICKS AROUND YOUR HOME**

You don’t have to be deep in the woods to be bitten by mosquitoes and ticks—your own backyard is a prime spot for bites. Follow these simple techniques to make your home and yard less attractive to mosquitoes and ticks.

Ticks often enter your yard through woods, tall grass, or on animals. These techniques can decrease the number of ticks entering your yard and eliminate their hiding places.

- Keep lawns mowed and edges trimmed.
- Clear brush, leaf litter and tall grass around the house, and at the edges of gardens, lawns, and stone walls.
- Stack woodpiles neatly in a dry area away from the house, preferably off the ground.
- Keep the ground under bird feeders clean.
- Locate playground equipment, swing sets, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees. Place them in a sunny, dry location, if possible.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas, and around patios and play equipment.

**Did you know?**

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in or near water, and their offspring “grow up” in water before emerging as adults that fly and bite. This process usually takes about one week. By checking for and eliminating standing water weekly, you can control the number of mosquitoes in and around your home.

- Empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Tightly cover water storage containers (including buckets, cisterns, and rain barrels). For containers without lids, use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.
- If you have a septic tank, repair cracks or gaps. Cover open vent or plumbing pipes. Use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.

In addition, install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home. Use air conditioning when available.
FOOD SAFETY

While summer is an ideal time for outdoor picnics and barbecues, it’s also a time when foodborne illnesses spike. Be prepared for any scenario and always clean, chill, separate and cook your food properly for a food safe summer.

Clean

⇒ Clean surfaces and utensils with soap and water.
⇒ Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.
⇒ Wash all fruits and vegetables under plain running water before eating, cutting or cooking, even if you plan to peel them.

Danger Zone
Bacteria can multiply quickly if left at room temperature or in the “Danger Zone” between 40°F and 140°F. Never leave perishable food out for more than 2 hours.

Chill

⇒ Chill raw and prepared foods as soon as possible if you’re not eating them right away.
⇒ Foods that need to be kept cold include: raw meat, poultry, and seafood; deli and luncheon meats or sandwiches; summer salads (tuna, chicken, egg, pasta, or seafood); cut up fruit and vegetables; and perishable dairy products.
⇒ Don’t leave food at room temperature for longer than 2 hours (or 1 hour if it’s above 90°F). If you are planning a picnic, keep perishable food in an insulated cooler packed with ice or ice packs.
⇒ A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than a partially filled one. Keep your food colder longer by placing coolers out of the direct sun and limit how often you’re opening them.
⇒ Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

Separate

⇒ Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat and poultry, cooked meat and poultry, and ready-to-eat items like vegetables or bread.
⇒ Always use a fresh, clean plate and tongs for serving cooked food. Never reuse items that touched raw meat or poultry to serve the food once its cooked.

Cook

⇒ Use a food thermometer to see if your food is the right temperature. Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. You can’t tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture. Just because your burger is brown, not pink, doesn’t mean it’s safe to eat!

Cook all meat and poultry to recommended internal temperatures

145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb (then allow the meat to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating)
160°F for ground meats (such as beef and pork)
165°F for all poultry (including ground chicken and turkey)
Animals and the Rabies Virus

Rabies is a deadly disease. Once symptoms appear in people or pets, there is no cure. Any person or pet that comes into contact with an infected animal is at risk of getting rabies. People are usually exposed to the rabies virus when an infected animal bites them, or when saliva from a rabid animal enters an open cut or mucous membrane (eye, nose or mouth).

The good news is, if you seek medical care immediately after an animal bite, treatment is very successful. Knowing how to protect yourself from rabies and what to do if a bite occurs will help you react quickly.

Protect Yourself From Rabies

Rabies is most often seen among wild animals such as raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes, but any mammal can be infected with rabies.

⇒ Don’t feed, touch or adopt wild animals, stray dogs or cats.
⇒ Teach children not to touch any animal they do not know and to tell an adult immediately if they are bitten.
⇒ Vaccinate your pet dogs, cats and ferrets, as well as horses and livestock animals. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors and only allowed outside while you are watching them.
⇒ Feed pets indoors.
⇒ Keep family pets indoors at night. Don’t leave them outside unattended or let them roam free.
⇒ Keep your property free of stored bird seed or other foods that may attract wild animals.
⇒ Tightly cap or put away garbage cans.
⇒ Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage. If your home has a chimney, make sure it is capped with a screen.
⇒ If a wild animal is living in a garage, shed or other part of your home, contact a wild animal control expert to have them removed. You can find wildlife control experts who work on a fee-for-service basis in your telephone directory under pest control.
⇒ If a wild animal is on your property, let it wander away. Bring children and pets indoors and alert neighbors.
⇒ If your pet has been injured by a wild animal, contact your veterinarian to get medical care. Even if your pet has been vaccinated, a booster dose of rabies vaccine may be needed.

Report all animal bites or contact with wild animals that are acting unusual to your local health department. In Clinton County, call CCHD at 518-565-4870. Try to keep track of the animal so it can be captured safely.
A BIT MORE ON RABIES...

“I found a bat inside my house. What should I do?”

Bats are known to carry rabies. If you see one enter your home, open windows so the bat can escape. Often, people don’t know how or when the bat got in. This can be a problem because a person can be bitten by a bat and not know it, especially if a bat is found in a room where a person was sleeping. In most cases, bats found indoors should be captured and sent for testing.

To capture a bat indoors:
1. Close windows and closet doors to keep it in the room.
2. Wear gloves.
3. When the bat has landed on a flat surface, place a coffee can over the bat.
4. Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
5. Tape the cardboard to the container.
6. Call your local health department for further instruction. In Clinton County, call 518-565-4870.

What should you do if an animal bites you?
1. Get the animal owner’s name, address and phone number—this is important!
2. Note where and when the bite happened.
3. Note the animal’s color, condition, size and temperament.
4. Thoroughly wash the wound with soap and water. Seek medical attention for your wound immediately—an animal bite can be infected with many diseases besides rabies.
5. Report the incident to the Clinton County Health Department Rabies Officer by calling 518-565-4870. CCHD will determine if treatment is necessary. Treatment may consist of one or multiple shots.

What happens when you call CCHD after a bite?
CCHD staff:
- Use the information you give to contact the animal owner and make sure the animal did not have rabies at the time it bit you. They do not search for or catch animals.
- Verify the rabies vaccination status of the animal.
- Track the animal’s health. If it is alive and well 10 days after it bit you, it did not have rabies when it bit you.

Get Your Pets Vaccinated Today!
For information on upcoming rabies clinics offered by the Clinton County Health Department, visit www.clintonhealth.org/rabiesclinics.
**Sun Safety**

Longer days and summer sun are welcome guests in Clinton County, but with them comes a greater risk for sunburns and heat-related illnesses. The sun's rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes and can cause skin cancer over time. Make the most of your summer days preventing sunburns and staying cool, hydrated and informed when temperatures soar.

**Beat the Heat**

- **Dress in lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing to help keep cool.**
- **Drink plenty of fluids before** you are thirsty, regardless of how active you are. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks as they will cause you to lose more body fluid. As you sweat you will need to replenish the fluids your body loses.
- **Stay out of the sun as much as possible.** People and pets should limit outdoor activities to the times of the day that are typically cooler (i.e. early morning or evening). Rest often in shady areas.
- **Stay in air-conditioned areas** as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, visit a shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
- **Never leave children or pets inside a parked car**, even briefly. Even with the windows cracked a car will quickly heat up to dangerous temperatures. LOOK before you LOCK.
- **Check on your neighbors, friends and family members**, especially the elderly and those without air conditioning.

**At Risk Groups**

Certain populations should be extra cautious of extreme temperatures, including: older adults (65+), infants and children, those with chronic medical conditions, athletes, those without air conditioning, and outdoor workers.

**Prevent the Burn**

⇒ **People of all skin types should apply sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater** that protects against both types of sun radiation (look for “UVA and UVB protection” or “broad spectrum” on the bottle’s label).

⇒ **Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours** or after swimming, sweating or toweling off.

⇒ **Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV rays which can cause cataracts later in life.** Look for glasses that state “100% UV ray protection” on the label.

⇒ **Avoid outdoor activities (or stay in the shade) when the sun’s rays are the strongest—usually late morning through mid-afternoon.**

**Check the date.**

Take a peek at the expiration date on your sunscreen. Sunscreen becomes less effective over time, increasing your chances of a burn. For sunscreen that does not have an expiration date, a guideline is to throw it away after three years. Leaving your sunscreen in hot temperatures, like cars, can also reduce its effectiveness more quickly.

**Forgot your SPF?**

Dispensers offering free sunscreen recently popped up in parks, playgrounds, beaches and trails throughout Clinton County. With funding from an Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Community Health Award, CCHD partnered with communities across the County to place 15 dispensers at various locations. Get outside and find one today!
Water Safety

- Be attentive while supervising children in or near water—drowning happens quickly and quietly. Do not do any other activities, such as reading or talking on the phone, even if lifeguards are present.

- Use the “buddy system.” Never swim alone.

- Learn to swim. Enroll your child in swimming lessons to reduce the risk of drowning.

- Do not use toys, like water wings or foam noodles, in the place of life jackets—they are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

- Secure your at-home pool with appropriate barriers, including a fence with a self-latching gate. Place a safety cover on the pool and remove any ladders or steps used for access. Store pool toys out of sight when not in use, as these may attract younger children.

- Use U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets.

- Know the local weather conditions and forecast before swimming or boating. Strong winds and thunderstorms with lighting strikes are dangerous.

- Learn CPR. In the time it takes for help to arrive, your CPR skills could save a life.

Water Illnesses

Recreational water illnesses (RWIs) are spread by swallowing, breathing in mists of, or having contact with contaminated water. They usually result in a gastrointestinal illness or “stomach bug.”

⇒ Don’t swallow water in pools, hot tubs or lakes.

⇒ Shower before swimming to protect others from germs you may have.

⇒ Take lots of bathroom breaks while swimming— and make sure your children do too.

⇒ Stay out of the water if you or your children have diarrhea.

Swimmer’s itch, a type of dermatitis or skin rash, is caused by an allergic reaction to certain microscopic parasites that infect some birds and mammals. The parasites are released from infected snails into fresh and salt water, such as lakes, ponds and oceans. They can burrow into the skin causing the allergic reaction and rash.

⇒ Towel dry or shower as soon as you leave the water.

⇒ Don’t swim in areas where swimmer’s itch is a known problem or where signs have been posted about unsafe water.

⇒ Don’t swim near or wade in marshy areas where snails are commonly found.

⇒ Don’t attract birds (i.e. by feeding them) to areas where people are swimming.
Information in this guide was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, www.cdc.gov); the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH, www.health.ny.gov); the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services FoodSafety.gov (www.foodsafety.gov); and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, www.epa.gov).