CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH CAUTIONS CALIFORNIANS ABOUT TICKS AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), today warned individuals who work or play outdoors in the winter months to be on the alert for ticks that may carry germs that cause Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses.

“Adult ticks continue to be active in temperatures above freezing and can pass pathogens such as Lyme disease to humans,” Horton said. “Outdoor workers and those who like to visit California’s beautiful natural scenery should be on the lookout for ticks.”

Ticks are small insect-like creatures often found in naturally vegetated areas, such as woods, brush or high grass. To protect yourself from ticks, follow these tips:

- Apply a repellent containing DEET on exposed skin.
- Use a spray with permethrin on your clothes to kill ticks.
- Wear light-colored long sleeves and long pants.
- Tuck your pants into your socks or boots and tuck in your shirt.
- Check yourself and your pets for ticks for several days after being in an area where ticks are found.

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove it with tweezers by grasping it close to the skin and applying a steady upward pressure to make sure the entire tick is pulled free. Do not use insecticides, lighted matches, gasoline, petroleum jelly or liquid soaps to remove ticks, as these techniques may cause injury and are ineffective. After the tick is removed, individuals should wash their hands and apply antiseptic to the affected area.

For additional information about tick-borne illnesses, including Lyme disease, and prevention tips visit www.cdph.ca.gov.

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