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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Protect Yourself from Ticks and Disease

WOODSTOCK IL – McHenry County Department of Health is advising residents to take precautions against tick bites to prevent contracting the diseases they may carry. Ticks are most active in Illinois during April, May and June and live in and near wooded areas, tall grass and brush. If infected, ticks can transmit diseases including ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia and Lyme disease through their bites.

The best way to protect against tick-borne illnesses is to avoid tick bites by taking the following precautions:

- Wear white or light-colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants so the tiny ticks are easier to see. Tuck long pants into your socks and boots. Wear a head covering or hat for added protection.
- Ticks are usually found in ankle- to shin-high grass and weeds. Ticks cannot hop or fly. Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET (30% or less) to exposed skin. Follow label directions. Permethrin repellents must be used on clothing only, not on skin.
- Keep your grass mowed and keep weeds cut around your home.
- If you are bitten, wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water; apply an antiseptic to the bite site.
- Know the symptoms of tick-borne disease. Consult with a physician if you develop a sudden fever, vomiting, severe headache and muscle pain following a tick bite.

If your pet spends time outdoors, check them before bringing them into your home. It's important for people to recognize the signs and symptoms of tick-borne diseases so appropriate treatment is not delayed. If left untreated, some tick-borne diseases can cause severe illness and may be fatal.

For more information about ticks and Lyme disease, visit www.mcdh.info, Environmental Health Division or contact MCDH at 815-334-4585.

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“Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966.”