



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST 2006 CASE OF LYME DISEASE REPORTED IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Public Urged to Take Precautions to Prevent Infection from Tick-borne Disease

The first case of Lyme disease for 2006 has been reported by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Public Health Services (PHS).

The victim is an adult male in his 50s. He was treated and not hospitalized. It cannot be determined whether the individual contracted the disease in San Diego County or on the East Coast during a recent trip. The man reported hiking in Penasquitos Canyon before discovering a tick bite.

"It's important for the public to be aware of Lyme disease and take precautions against this tick-borne disease," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "Untreated, Lyme disease can cause lasting complications."

Lyme disease is usually heralded by a circular rash at the site of a tick bite. Other symptoms include fatigue, chills, fever, headache, and muscle and joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes. If not treated, the disease can spread to other parts of the body, causing Bell's palsy (loss of muscle tone on either side of the face), severe headaches and neck stiffness due to meningitis, as well as joint pain that lasts for months or years.

"To avoid Lyme disease or other tick-borne illnesses, people who work or play in grassy or brushy areas need to take special care to avoid picking up ticks," said Gary Erbeck, Director, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.

Tips include:

- Stay on marked paths, choose wide trails and walk in the center. Avoid grassy or brushy areas.
- Wear light-colored long sleeved clothing, tuck shirts into pants, and pants into socks or boots.
- Check clothing, body and companions for ticks frequently. Remove ticks immediately.
- Apply insect repellent to clothing and footwear.
- Keep pets on a leash. Treat pets with insecticide powders or sprays labeled for tick control.

For more information on prevention, go to www.SDVector.com. For more information on symptoms, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov.

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