



## Protect Yourself from Ticks and Mosquitos

The heat is on, it is vacation time! The weather is perfect for fun outdoor activities like hikes, watersports, BBQs and picnics. It is also prime season for ticks and mosquitos to feed on exposed skin. Protect yourself from bug bites and protect yourself from illness such as Lyme disease and Zika virus.

**Lyme disease** spreads when an infected blacklegged tick bites and attaches to you or your pet for at least 24 hours. This is why it is important to check for ticks every day if you live in a high risk area like Connecticut. If you develop symptoms such as a rash, fever, body aches, within a few weeks of the bite, see your doctor.

Protect yourself from tick bites by avoiding high grass and brush, walking in the middle of the trail when hiking, and wearing long sleeves and long pants in light colors so ticks will be visible on clothing. Insect repellent containing 20-30% DEET should be applied to exposed skin and clothing following the product instructions. Permethrin may be applied to clothing, boots, socks, and other gear. After spending time outside check your body for ticks, be sure to check the kids, pets and gear too. The CDC recommends drying clothing in the dryer on high heat for 1 hour to kill ticks.

Preventing mosquito bites is the best way to prevent the spread of **Zika Virus**, there is no treatment or vaccine. The mosquito that carries Zika virus is most active during the day however be cautious at night as well. Following the same recommendations for preventing tick bites will help prevent mosquito bites. In addition it is helpful to stay in air-conditioned rooms with screens on the windows and use mosquito nets in high risk countries to prevent Zika virus. It is important to keep your environment free of standing water that attracts mosquitos as well.

Zika virus spreads through mosquito bites, sexual contact with a man infected by the Zika virus and from a pregnant woman to her fetus. Symptoms are usually mild flu like symptoms, fever, rash, joint pain red eyes, muscle pain and headache lasting a few days to a week. Zika can cause birth defects in fetuses infected before birth. If you think you might have been infected with Zika virus, contact your physician.

Stay safe this summer, protect yourself and your loved ones and enjoy the relaxation of the outdoors. For more information on Zika virus or Lyme disease go to:

[CDC recommendations on Lyme disease](#) [CDC recommendations on Zika Virus](#)

**Contact Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley Faith community nurse  
for more information. 860-767-0186**