



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Over 40% of ticks collected in Eau Claire parks infected with Lyme disease
Community partners join forces to fight Lyme disease

Eau Claire, WI, May 4th, 2018 – Spring marks the beginning of tick season! And with over 40% of deer/bear ticks collected in Eau Claire area parks infected with Lyme disease, it’s clear that the disease is booming. Lyme disease is the second most prevalent reportable communicable disease in Eau Claire County. It’s in our backyards, our parks, our trails...and we need to talk about how to prevent it.

In 2014, the Health Department began a tick collection project at two rural county parks to determine the percentage of ticks infected with Lyme disease. In 2017, they received grant funding to expand their tick collection project to two additional parks in the city. As part of the grant, the Health Department is partnering with Beaver Creek Reserve, City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, and Eau Claire County Parks and Forest to increase community awareness about Lyme disease.

These partners are distributing a survey to see what the community knows about Lyme disease. The Health Department will be at the *Amazing Eau Claire Clean up* on Saturday, May 5th giving out the survey to event volunteers (and giving away a prize basket for volunteers!). They will also be at several events throughout the summer. *Keep your eyes on the Health Department Facebook page for more ways to be entered to win a prize basket!* The information collected from the survey will be used to develop social media and to determine other outreach strategies. These partners will also be incorporating tick prevention education into their programming throughout the year. In addition, be on the lookout for new signs (pictured on right) in the local city and county parks and at Beaver Creek Reserve.

“With so many mental and physical health benefits associated with being in nature, we want to promote how to protect yourself from tick bites so you can continue enjoying the outdoors,” says Erik Kesler, Executive Director at Beaver Creek Reserve.

“As a result of this project, we hope to see less of our residents affected by Lyme disease because they are aware of how common it is in our community, and how they can prevent it,” says Gina Schemenauer, Health Educator at the Health Department.

For more information about Tick-borne diseases, please visit:

<http://www.ci.eauclaire.wi.us/departments/health-department/communicable-disease/tick-borne-disease> or contact us at 715-839-4718.

We need your help....we want to know what the community knows about Lyme disease.
 Please take our quick survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2DCQG2H>



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