



PRESS RELEASE for Tiny Insects, Big Threats

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Tiny Insects, Big Threats

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Spring is finally here and along with the beautiful weather, spring also brings ticks and mosquitoes. They can transmit serious diseases to animals (and sometimes people). Here are the main offenders in our area and how to reduce risk.

Blacklegged (deer) ticks can spread Lyme disease and at least five other significant diseases—of those only Lyme has a vaccine available. Dogs, cats, livestock, horses, and people are all at risk. These ticks are tiny (some as small as a pinhead) and can be hard to spot on dark fur and skin. Ask your veterinarian about the best flea/tick preventative for your pet and never use dog products on cats (they can be toxic). No product is 100% effective, so check pets after they come inside; a lint roller can help pick up ticks on the outside of the coat. Use an appropriate preventative for livestock, too: Ask your veterinarian which products are safest and most effective. Check yourself for ticks as well.

Reduce tick numbers outside by removing leaf litter, tall grass, and brush at yard edges. Mow regularly, keep play areas away from the margins, and, if possible, add a 3-foot strip of wood chips or gravel to limit tick movement into the lawn.

Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus, Avian Flu and Heartworm, all of which can cause serious illness in animals. Reduce risk by using a veterinarian-recommended repellent product for your animals and keeping cats indoors—especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

To reduce mosquitoes around your home and barn, dump standing water (containers, tarps, old tires) where they breed. Keep weeds clear of ponds and ditches so fish, birds, and bats can feed on larvae. For detailed guidance, see the American Mosquito Control Association website (mosquito.org).

These risks shouldn't keep you indoors; the key is awareness and prevention. For more information on ticks and mosquitoes and their impact on animals (and people), visit the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (vtvets.org), CDC (cdc.gov), or VeterinaryPartner (veterinarypartner.com.)