

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of May 4

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

One of the few things Dutchess County would rather not be known for is our population of ticks. They can carry bacteria, viruses, *and* parasites, depending on species and life stage; and some ticks can carry more than one of the above. Ticks aren't born carrying germs, but become infected when they feed on the blood of infected animals. In Dutchess County, this most commonly happens when larval and nymphal ticks feed on small rodents like mice and chipmunks.

Ticks in their nymphal stage are the most likely to transmit disease to humans, and are among the hardest to detect since they're about the size of a

poppy seed. Adult ticks can also carry disease; but at least they're larger, and thus easier to find and remove before they latch on.

In March 2026, the Millbrook-based Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies released its latest analysis of the evolving tick threat, based on nine years of tick collection (2014-22) from forested areas on the Cary campus. The analysis found that just under 40 percent of ticks were capable of spreading at least one pathogen to humans, most notably the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

The analysis also found that 1 in 10 ticks were carrying more than one pathogen, and therefore recommends that healthcare providers who encounter a patient with signs of a tick bite test for multiple pathogens, and treat according to their findings.

Does This Mean I'm Stuck Inside All Summer?

You can enjoy exploring the outdoors with less worry of tick bites if you practice steps to keep ticks off you, starting with evaluating your risk.

People who spend time outside in grassy, brushy areas are more likely to be bitten by a tick. It's less common to be bitten by a tick in a regularly mowed back yard, but not impossible.

Examples of outdoor activities that can bring you in close contact with ticks include hiking, camping, gardening, playing in leaves, outdoor photography, and hunting. Reduce your risk with these precautions:

When possible, **wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants** to cover your skin and provide a barrier against ticks.

Wear light-colored clothes to help you spot any ticks that might be crawling on you.

Consider wearing clothes that are pre-treated with permethrin, a product that will kill or repel ticks as well as mosquitos. You can buy permethrin spray to treat clothing yourself, but follow the precautions as described on the product's label: It's *only* for fabric, and *not* skin. In other words, don't spray clothes while you're wearing them. Hang your clothes outdoors and do your spraying there. Spray enough so that the clothing appears slightly damp, and allow it to dry completely. On a sunny day, this should take about four hours. You can spray hiking boots as well, but there's no need to spray underwear.

Cat lovers, take note: Permethrin spray is also highly toxic to cats while freshly applied. It's another reason to treat clothing while outside, and to change clothing when going back inside in case the cat wants to jump on your lap.

Use insect repellent. Most of the chemicals that repel mosquitoes, like DEET, are also somewhat effective against ticks.

Check yourself and others for ticks regularly while you are walking, hiking, or spending time outside, especially after brushing against tall grass and sitting on rocks or logs. Ticks can be hiding in hard-to-see areas like your back, behind your knees, under your arms, and in your hair. Ask for help checking the areas you can't easily see or reach. Help others check for ticks, too.

Do another tick check when you return home. It's important to check pets and gear for ticks, as well, since ticks can ride into your living space on pets, backpacks, and coats, and then attach to a person later. Take a shower as soon as possible after you return indoors.

Put the clothing you wore in the dryer first. Ten minutes on the hot cycle should kill off ticks; then wash the clothes and dry them as usual.

A good pair of fine-tipped tweezers will come in handy, should a tick latch on. Grab the tick as close to your skin as possible. Slowly and steadily pull the tick up and straight out, away from your skin, without twisting or jerking the

tick out. Wash your hands, then apply antiseptic or antibiotic ointment to the bite site.

Tick Removal Methods That DON'T Work

Don't bother with nail polish, burning the tick, petroleum jelly (vaseline), soap, or whatever folk remedy your neighbor saw on social media.

Ugh - There's A Rash

Keep an eye out for redness or irritation, and not just at the bite site. A tick can latch on, feed, and drop off without our noticing, especially the immature ticks we mentioned earlier.

Not every rash means a tick-borne disease, though. Check in with your healthcare provider as soon as possible, so that any testing and treatment plan can get underway.

Volunteer Exercise Instructors Wanted

OFA's Senior Exercise Program (www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise) is looking for volunteer instructors. No experience is necessary. OFA provides all training. If you'd like to combine volunteering with meeting your own goals of staying physically active, reach out to us at ofa@dutchessny.gov, or 845-486-2555 during business hours.

OFA "Mix and Mingle" – Fewer Than Ten Spots Left (as of Fri 5/1)

The Office for the Aging is trying out a new experience with the older adults of Dutchess County: a free, first-ever "Mix and Mingle" for Dutchess County older adults, on Tuesday, May 19th at 2:00pm, at the auditorium at Bowdoin Park, 85 Sheafe Rd. in Wappinger. It'll be a great opportunity to make new friends, learn more about the Office for the Aging, enjoy some wonderful Dutchess County scenery, and demonstrate the power of human connection as a great way for older adults to live their best lives. "Mocktails" and light refreshments will be available. Space is limited, so registration is required.

Call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 to save yourself a spot. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail or email.

Still Time Left To Sign Up For Conference On Caregiving (Thu 5/7)

The annual Conference on Caregiving takes place on Thursday, May 7th from 8:30 am – 2 pm at the Wallace Center on the grounds of the FDR Historic Site on Route 9 in Hyde Park.

This year's theme is "20/20 Vision – Planning for a Bright Future." Topics in support of caregivers will include estate and financial planning; caregiving and grief support; end-of-life doula services; and Tai Chi/wellness. OFA staff will be at the conference to answer guests' questions about aging services in Dutchess County.

Registration takes place through the Alzheimer's Association. Call their helpline to save yourself a seat: **800-272-3900**. [You can also use this link.](#)

Breakfast and lunch are provided.

The Caregiver Conference is organized by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging with the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter,

Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley, Hudson Valley Hospice, and community members Cathy Regan, RN; Falisia Cotten-Swain, LCSW-R; and Eileen Hendriksen, LMSW.

OFA Picnic Registration is Now Open

The 2026 OFA Summer Picnic schedule is available, including Google Maps links to each picnic venue, at www.dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics.

Seating is limited for picnics, which tend to reach capacity quickly, so reservations are required.

To reserve your spot for the picnic serving your community, call 845-486-2555 during business hours – weekdays, 9a-5p. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail or email. The picnics are unable to accept walk-ins.

Over the next couple of months, OFA will have mailed over 50,000 picnic reminder cards to older-adult households throughout the county. The reminder cards are not formal invitations, just reminders to make a reservation. You can make a picnic reservation without having received a card.

On picnic day: We strongly encourage carpooling by picnic guests.

Many thanks to the Pines at Poughkeepsie and Westchester Medical Center Health Network for their support of the picnic program, now in its 34th year.

Household Hazardous Materials Disposal Events

Dutchess County's Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics

Recycling events will take place from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the following dates:

Saturday, June 6

Dutchess County Department of Public Works

626 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie

Online registration opens Wednesday, May 6

Saturday, Sept. 19

Dutchess County Fairgrounds

6636 Route 9, Rhinebeck

Online registration opens Wednesday, August 19

Saturday, Oct. 17

Dutchess County Department of Public Works

626 Dutchess Turnpike, Poughkeepsie

Online registration opens Thursday, Sept. 17

These popular events are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and residents should anticipate wait times upon arrival. Participation is limited to the first 400 households per event, and pre-registration is required. A \$10 registration fee applies, and these events typically fill quickly, so residents are encouraged to register online as soon as possible.

Beginning Wednesday, May 6, residents can [register online](#) for the June 6 event using a credit card or register and pay by check by calling (845) 486-2841. Checks should be made payable to “Dutchess County Commissioner of Finance” and mailed to the Dutchess County Division of Solid Waste Management, 96 Sand Dock Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

These events provide residents with a safe and responsible way to dispose of household chemicals, electronics and other materials that require special handling, helping to prevent harmful substances from entering the environment. The program is part of the County’s ongoing efforts to reduce

waste, protect natural resources and promote sustainable practices across Dutchess County.

Additional details about the Dutchess County Division of Solid Waste Management's Household Hazardous Waste Disposal & Electronics Recycling Events is [available online](#).

Other news:

[Six things that SHOULD NOT be in your wallet](#) (and three things that SHOULD be in your wallet).

We try to keep a watchful eye out for new scams, and sometimes that means [following the news from Finland](#).

What's the state of the science in "[age tech](#)" smart home systems?

[Ever think about having a roommate?](#)

We do sometimes go on here about the power of optimism in improving chances of successful aging, but we don't want to leave anybody behind - so [what are the grumps and cynics supposed to do?](#)

This week's birthdays:

5/9: Singer/songwriter/pianist [Billy Joel](#) (77)

5/10: Singer/songwriter [Donovan](#) (80)

5/11: Singer/songwriter/actor [Eric Burdon](#) (85)

5/12: Singer/songwriter/guitarist [Steve Winwood](#) (78)

5/13: Singer/songwriter/pianist/drummer/producer [Stevie Wonder](#) (76)

5/14: Baseball Hall-of-Famer [Tony Pérez](#) (84)

5/15: Actor/director [Chazz Palminteri](#) (74)

And two special Bad Jokes for Mother's Day!

How do you know when something is officially lost?

When mom can't find it.

Mom's recipe for iced coffee: Have kids. Make coffee. Forget you made coffee. Put it in the microwave. Forget you put it in the microwave. Drink it cold.