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For Immediate Release

IT'S TICK SEASON AGAIN, DON'T GET BITTEN
Greenwich based Time for Lyme advises about 10 things
you should know about Lyme and other tick-borne diseases

Greenwich, CT, June 2011 – As the dog days of summer approach, Lyme advocate and Greenwich Department of Health Director Caroline Baisley knows all too well about the horrific affects of Lyme. “I’ve suffered for over 10 years with the illness. And while I am largely recovered today, I am eager to make sure that others in Greenwich and beyond are educated about Lyme,” notes Ms. Baisley.

Stamford Department of Health Director and advisor to Time for Lyme (TFL) Anne Fountain agrees and adds, “Lyme can present itself quite insidiously, particularly in the preadolescent age group. It is critical to be vigilant about tick checks and see a doctor quickly if you suspect a bite and are experiencing any symptoms. You can contact your local health department to get your tick tested for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease”.

TFL highlights the following 10 things you should know about Lyme and other tick borne diseases. . Knowing this information can be critical to catching and curing it early and possibly eliminating years of painful, frustrating and sometimes debilitating illness.

PROTECTION IS PARAMOUNT & AWARENESS IS KEY TO EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT

- 1. Check yourself, family members and pets for ticks daily.** Remember that ticks are carried by deer, mice, birds and other small animals found right in your backyard. Nymphal ticks are the size of a poppy seed in early spring and are particularly hard to find. They are active above 35 degrees. You can be infected repeatedly with Lyme disease each time you are bitten by a tick.
- 2. Remove the tick properly.** Use blunt curved tweezers and grasp the tick close to the skin and pull in an upward, steady motion. NEVER squeeze or rupture the body of the tick while still attached because its belly contents, which may contain disease-producing organisms, could be expressed into your bloodstream. Make sure to wash your hands and the area of the bite with soap and water.

Once removed, take the tick to a Department of Health laboratory or testing facility to have it tested for the presence of the organism that causes Lyme disease. Since infection can spread rapidly throughout your system, you may want to consult your doctor about prophylactic antibiotic treatment.

- 3. Examine/evaluate.** Early symptoms of tick-borne illness can include a headache, stiff neck, numbness, tingling, fatigue, swollen glands or migratory pains that may come and go. Late stage symptoms are generally multi-systemic and can be very serious. A person infected with Lyme disease can exhibit symptoms within days of exposure, but symptoms may appear weeks, months or even years after the bite.
- 4. There’s not always a rash.** A person may have Lyme disease without presenting the most obvious and “classic” symptoms such as bull’s-eye rash, flu, joint pain or swelling. Many people never see a tick or develop a rash.

5. **Testing and Treating.** Since the diagnostic tests for Lyme disease are often unreliable, a clinical diagnosis for Lyme disease should be made by a physician based on medical history and symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports this in their literature pertaining to Lyme disease. There are over one hundred different strains of Lyme disease in the United States; therefore, length and choice of antibiotic treatment varies greatly, and a standard antibiotic treatment of 2-3 weeks may be insufficient.
6. **Children ages 2-12 are at the highest risk** for being bitten by ticks because they often play in tick habitats. Children often find it difficult to explain the subtleties of how they are feeling, and may often appear well and remain physically active.
7. **Symptoms.** Many people who suffer from Lyme disease experience symptoms that come and go over time. Continued symptoms or the development of new ones after treatment may be a sign of persistent infection or a new infection. The medical community is divided over the existence of "chronic" or persistent Lyme disease. The symptoms of Lyme disease (also known as the Great Imitator) may mimic those of multiple sclerosis, lupus, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, mononucleosis, Alzheimers, Guillian-Barre Syndrome, ALS, rheumatoid arthritis, Parkinson's Disease, ADD or ADHD, GERD, or many other diseases. Lyme disease can affect behavioral and cognitive functioning. Memory loss, attention deficit and processing problems, mental confusion, slurred speech, disorientation, irritability, depression, anxiety, hallucinations, and learning problems have all been reported as a result of Lyme disease.
8. **Co-infection.** A single tick bite can transmit more than one tick-borne illness, such as babesiosis, anaplasmosis, bartonella or tularemia. Co-infections can complicate Lyme diagnosis and treatment.
9. **Educate Yourself.** The more you know and understand about Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness, the greater your chances are of avoiding infection and detecting illness if it occurs.
10. **Treatable.** Lyme disease in its initial stage is often easily treatable; however, delayed diagnosis or inadequate treatment can lead to serious brain, heart or joint problems.

About Time for Lyme: *Time for Lyme's mission is to fund & promote research for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. For more information call 203-969-1333 or visit www.timeforlyme.org*