

For Immediate Release
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Got Lyme disease? You're not alone

KINGSTON, R.I. – August 28, 2005 – Are you experiencing the joint pain, fatigue and target-shaped rash that are symptoms of Lyme disease? If so, you're not alone.

According to a University of Rhode Island tick researcher, it should come as no surprise that an increasing number of Rhode Islanders were infected with Lyme disease this year, given the high numbers of ticks he found in his statewide surveys.

“My statistics show that tick abundance this year was up 84.5 percent over last year, and tick numbers are 109 percent higher than the average of the last 13 years,” said Thomas Mather, director of URI's Center for Vector Borne Disease.

While reliable records of Lyme disease cases in the state are not maintained, Mather is convinced that this year will be a record-breaking year for the disease.

“The peak of tick activity was in late-July this year -- several weeks later than usual -- and the peak of Lyme disease cases is usually about two or three weeks after that. So it's likely that many people are just now beginning to experience symptoms,” he said.

Mather has been monitoring tick abundance in the state since 1992, and his data has corresponded with the number of Lyme disease cases reported.

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