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NEWS RELEASE

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Kanawha-Charleston, Fayette Health Departments To Dispense Medicine To Prevent Onset Of Lyme Disease

Kanawha-Charleston Health Officer Says West Virginia Is Facing An Extreme Tick Season This Year

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and Fayette County Health Department are now offering the antibiotic doxycycline for use in the prevention of Lyme disease, said Dr. Steven Eshenaur, who serves as health officer for both health departments.

“We are facing another extreme tick season. Tick bites are up nationally and in West Virginia. In fact, last year was a record year for Lyme disease in West Virginia, and we are already well past last year’s numbers at this point,” Eshenaur said. “It’s really difficult to go outdoors, even in your yard, and not get a tick on you, so we think it’s important to give folks the opportunity to prevent Lyme disease with a prophylactic dose of doxycycline. Lyme disease can have serious symptoms – some potentially lifelong – and is to be taken seriously.”

According to the CDC, doxycycline has been shown to work well as a prophylaxis for Lyme disease if taken early enough after exposure. Eshenaur recommends the two-pill, 200 mg dose of the antibiotic if someone has had a Blacklegged tick attached for **up to 72 hours**. The longer the tick is attached, the higher the chance of infection. This low dose of doxycycline has been shown to be preventive.

Health department clinic teams will walk patients through a brief office visit before dispensing doxycycline. A \$25 fee will cover the consultation and

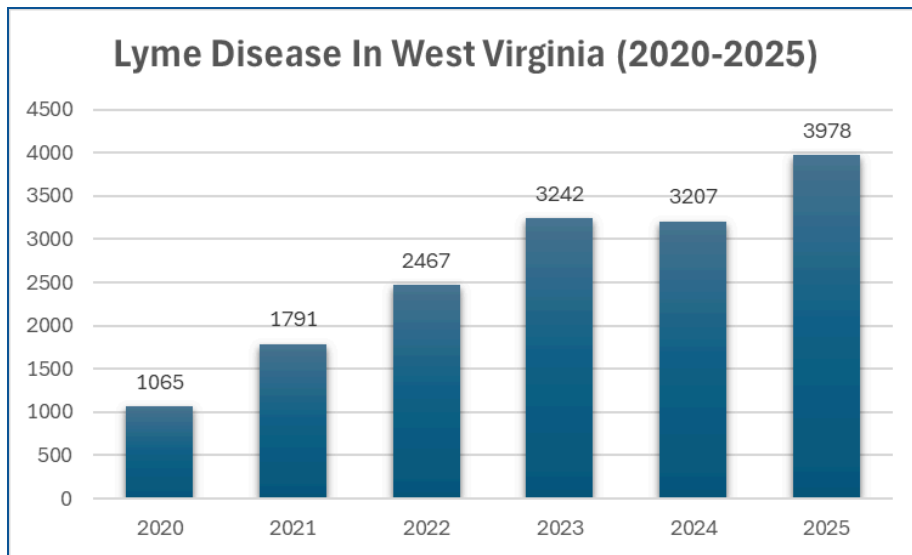
medication. The visit does not include treatment or testing for tick diseases. Walk-ins are welcome, but an appointment ensures a shorter wait time.

“This is about prevention. The easiest disease to treat is the one you never get,” Eshenaur says about all preventable diseases. “In the case of tick diseases, the best prevention is to never get them on you in the first place. When you head outside, use a tick repellent with DEET as a main ingredient. Wear pants, long sleeves and a hat. When you are back inside, do a thorough tick check and change your clothes immediately.”

According to data tracked by the West Virginia Department of Health, Lyme disease has been on the rise significantly here since 2020, increasing from around 1,000 in 2020 to almost 4,000 in 2025. Data shows that other tick-borne diseases are also on the rise in the Mountain State.

Lyme disease commonly causes headaches, muscle aches, fever, and bulls-eye rash and can result in chronic health issues. For more information on Lyme disease and doxycycline, visit the [CDC](#), or call KCHD at 304-348-8080 or FCHD at 304-574-1617.

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SOURCE: WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU OF PUBLIC HEALTH