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For Immediate Release

**SPRING TRAINING FOR LYME DISEASE:
*Five things to know about avoiding Lyme infection***

Greenwich, CT, April 2010 – As the temperatures rise and the days get longer, you're not the only one getting more active outdoors: The ticks that spread Lyme disease have a case of Spring Fever, too.

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in the United States, and it poses the biggest threat in the spring and summer, says Debbie Siciliano, co-president of Time for Lyme, Inc., a research, education and advocacy group. According to the latest government figures, there are roughly 29,000 confirmed Lyme disease cases in 2008 — and experts agree that there are many, many more that go unreported (or undiagnosed). In fact, some estimate that there are ten times as many cases of Lyme each year.

Spring and summer are dangerous for two reasons, says Dr. Daniel Cameron, immediate past president of ILADS and internal medicine physician specializing in Lyme. As things warm up, the ticks that carry Lyme are busy reproducing and feeding. At the same time, humans are spending more time outside, often in an area that ticks also frequent, doing yard work, playing sports or just lounging around and enjoying the first sunny days of summer. The ticks that transmit Lyme (called Ixodes, also known as black-legged or deer ticks) are tiny, but a bite from an infected tick can leave you with a endless array of problems that ranges from fatigue and flu-like aches and pains to chronic and debilitating joint pain, nervous system malfunctions, and even cardiac complications.

Unfortunately, many people don't know much about Lyme disease — or how to prevent it.

Here are five things that everyone should know about avoiding Lyme:

1. **Lyme-carrying Ticks Are Tiny.** Ixodes ticks are very, very small, and the biggest adults are less than 1/10 inch long. In fact, unless they're already engorged (full of blood), they're much smaller than the head of a pin and nearly impossible to see, says Dr. Cameron. The ticks can become infected with bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which live inside the tick and can be transmitted when the tick attaches itself to a host and begins to suck up blood. Once engorged they can become large. This is important to point out because sometimes people see an engorged tick and think it cannot be a deer tick because it's too big.
2. **Ticks Are Everywhere.** Lyme disease is most common in the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes regions. But it's been reported all over the United States — and in 50 countries around the world. Experts think that global climate changes may be working to increase tick populations and help them thrive in Canada and other areas that until now were too cold to support them.
3. **Ticks Stick Close to Home.** It's been estimated that three-quarters of all Lyme cases were acquired through household activities — gardening, playing or relaxing in the yard, for example, instead of taking a camping trip or hike far from home. Ticks love to hide in plants and shrubs, grasses, and woodpiles, all of which are common in many residential landscapes. They also will catch a ride on your pet dog or cat, meaning you don't have to get anywhere near a deer to pick up a Lyme infected tick.
4. **Prevention Is Key.** Being diligent in your efforts to avoid ticks is by far the best way to prevent Lyme disease, says WHO. Coat exposed skin with a repellent containing DEET, wear long-sleeve shirts and pants (tuck your pant cuffs into your socks), and be sure to check your skin and hair when you come back inside. Parents are encouraged to ask their physicians for advice on the appropriate amount of DEET for their family. Use DEET or Permethrin (an insecticide that's safe for use on fabrics, not skin) on your clothing.

5. **Timing is Everything.** Unlike mosquitoes ticks take their time: A tick must grab hold and burrow its mouth parts into your skin before it can begin feeding, a process that usually takes between 10 and 30 minutes. The longer the tick is attached, the greater the chance of transmission of disease.

About Time for Lyme

Time for Lyme is an organization dedicated to eliminating the devastating effects of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness. Its mission is to prevent the spread of disease, develop definitive diagnostic tools and effective treatments, and to ultimately find a cure for tick-borne illness by supporting research, education, and the acquisition and dissemination of information. In addition, TFL continues to act as an advocate for Lyme disease sufferers and their families through support of legislative reform on the federal, state and local levels. www.timeforlyme.org.

Time for Lyme will present an educational forum titled, "Lyme Disease: Your Body, Your Brain" on Thursday, April 22nd 7:00-9:00 PM at the Central Middle School, 9 Indian Rock Lane, Greenwich, CT 06830. The forum is presented in cooperation with The Greenwich Department of Health, and Families for Greenwich Hospital and is open to the public at no cost. No reservations are required.