

Ticks

June 1, 2014

Ticks Are becoming a hot topic in our area because the likelihood of being bit by one has increased greatly in the last 6 years. Our issue isn't with all ticks. Some are just your regular land leeches that hop on for a bit, get their fill, and drop off. Like the Dog/wood tick, other than being annoying when stuck to you there is really no problem with getting bit by one.

And then we have the Blacklegged Deer tick. Deer ticks transmit Lyme disease from birds and rodents that are infected with Lyme. Deer ticks will feed off an infected host and carry the disease in their belly to the next host. The longer a tick is on you the higher the risk of being infected by Lyme IF it is a carrier. If you remove the tick within 24-36 hours this will usually prevent infection. However removing the tick asap is always better.

The Public Health Agency recognized Lyme Disease as a Nationally Notifiable Disease in December 2009.

Reported cases of Lyme have been increasing since then.

- 2009-128
- 2010-132
- 2011-258
- 2012-315

Unfortunately once you have gotten Lyme and have had it treated successfully it will not provide you with long-term immunity. Re-infection is possible

How does Lyme affect the body? Lyme disease is a multisystem illness.

It starts by replicating in the skin. When this happens we end up seeing the Bull's Eye rash. This only shows up in 70%-80% of victims. The Bull's Eye rash also known as Erythema Migrans (EM) could show up anywhere between 3-30 days after infection. Once its replicated in the skin it travels through the blood stream to other internal sites.

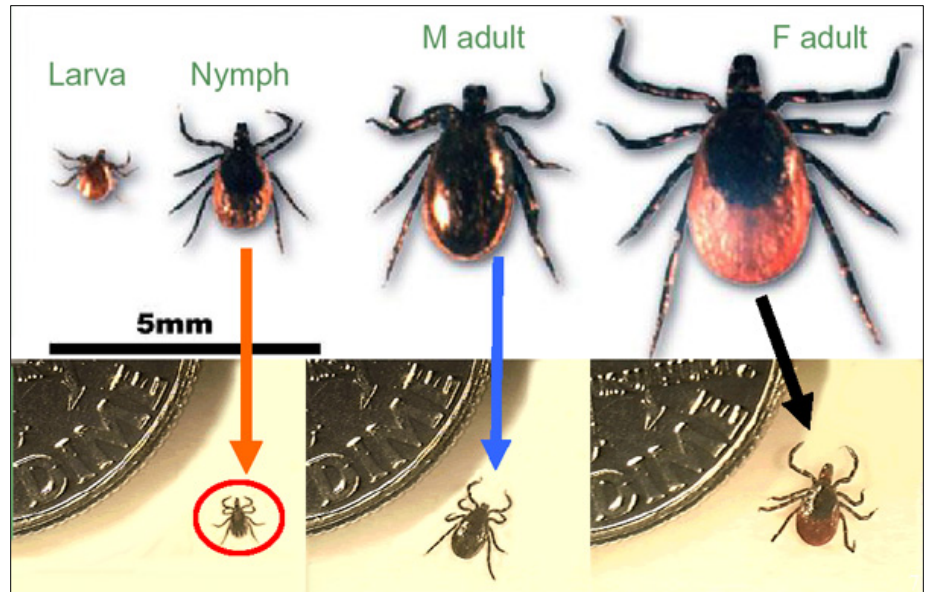
Early Disseminated Disease

- Neurological (15%-20% untreated)
- Cardiac (4%-8% untreated)
- Rheumatologic-Joints/joint tissue (60% untreated)
- Cutaneous-Nerves to the skin
- Additional Manifestations

Initial symptoms vary person to person and some people may have no symptoms at all. Or not until weeks after a bite. The sooner you get treatment the sooner you can recover.

Some Signs and Symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Fever or chills
- Headache



- Spasms or weakness
- Numbness or tingling
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Skin rash
- Cognitive dysfunction (brain fog) or dizzy
- Nervous system disorders
- Arthritis/arthritis symptoms
- Abnormal heartbeat

We live in a high risk area for ticks. Having the knowledge about Prevention and Removing ticks properly will ensure the confidence of not only our students but their parents as well.

Prevention:

- Swim often to wash loose ticks free
- Wear clothes that are light so ticks are easily spotted
- Cover skin with long pants and sleeve when walking through long grass
- Stay on cleared paths
- Use Bug spray containing DEET
- Do a regular tick check

Removing Ticks Do's and Don't's

Do:

- Hold tweezers at a right angle to the body of the tick
- Pinch gently at the head, but firmly
- Pull slow and straight away from host
- After tick has been fully removed clean the bit site with a disinfectant to avoid other infection

Don't:

- Twist tweezers as you pull out the tick-This could cause parts of the mouth to break off and cause other infections
- Pinch the engorged part of the body-The engorged body is where the Lyme disease is being held. Anything that would force blood back into the host causes a higher risk of infection
- Cover ticks in dish soap, Vaseline, or other thickened liquids the get it to back out-This will not cause the tick to back out but it will cause regurgitation of blood which is not ideal.

Parents are the people with the questions. What they want to know from you is that you understand the risk of a tick bite. You know how to prevent a bite from occurring. And if it does occur you know the proper procedure for removing it and what to watch for.

Anyone looking for more information can be directed to a supervisor or Rob

