

LYME DISEASE PREVENTION Information for Parents

New York State continues to have one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country. The disease is transmitted by the bite of an infected deer (black legged) tick. Common habitats for the deer tick are leaf litter in wooded areas, grassy areas along wooded edges and low bushes and shrubs. Deer ticks are not commonly found on athletic field and cut lawns. Children may be at particular risk because of the amount of time they spend playing outdoors. May is the month when most people who get Lyme disease are exposed to it. Nymphal deer ticks are active from May through July, and it is the bite of these small ticks (as opposed to adult deer ticks active in fall) that lead to most Lyme infections. To help reduce this risk of tick exposure, remind your family of these safety tips.



Before Going out:

- Wear light-colored, tightly woven clothing to make it easier to spot ticks
- Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks
- Wear closed shoes / sneakers rather than open sandals
- Use a tick repellent as directed. Products should contain DEET (for clothing OR skin) or Permethrin (for clothing ONLY) Remind children to ask an adult to apply the tick repellent.

DO NOT apply to hands or face. Use products with less than 10% DEET. Pay particular attention to tops of shoes and lower portion of pant legs, as ticks are most likely to attach here. Follow manufacturer's directions carefully. **Do not use on children under 3 years of age.**



While Outside:

Stay in the center of trails; avoid low bushes and leafy brush; periodically check clothing and skin for ticks and remove.



Upon Return:

Check clothing, skin, and hair for ticks (take special note of your child's navel, underarm, groin area and behind the ears). If a tick is found, remove it carefully with tweezers. If it was attached, note spot of attachment, mark calendar, and save tick in a jar for later identification. Should symptoms such as an expanding "bull's eye" rash, flu-like symptoms or painful joints develop, contact your physician.

Use These Steps for Proper Tick Removal:

- **GRASP** tick as close to skin as possible, using tweezers;
- **PULL** gently with a steady, backward pressure. Be patient!
- **WASH** area with soap, water and topical antiseptic



REMEMBER:

- Never burn, smother or crush a tick! This can increase your risk for Lyme disease.
- It generally takes 36 hours for a deer tick to infect its host with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Please check for ticks daily.

For more information please contact: The Broome County Health Department (607) 778-3911 or the Tioga County Health Department (607) 687-8600.