How Can I Safely Remove a Tick?

If you DO find a tick attached to your skin, do not panic. Not all ticks are infected, and your risk of Lyme disease is greatly reduced if the tick is removed within the first 36 hours.

To best remove a tick:

- Use a tick remover.

- If you don't have a tick remover use tweezers.

- Place the tick in a small container of rubbing alcohol to kill it.

- Clean the bite wound with rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

- Monitor the site of the bite for the next 30 days for the appearance of a rash. If you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately. Although not routinely recommended, taking antibiotics within three days after a tick bite may be beneficial for some persons. This would apply to deer tick bites that occurred in areas where Lyme disease is common and there is evidence that the tick fed for more than one day. In cases like this, you should discuss the possibilities with your doctor or health care provider.

Tick Identification

The **Deer tick** is very small and orange brown in color with a black spot near the head.

The **Lone Star tick** has a star-shaped white spot on its back.

The **Dog tick** is reddish-brown and larger than deer ticks.

How Can I Prevent Ticks from Biting?

Generally, ticks do not jump or fly onto their victims. They wait on vegetation and cling to animals and humans as they brush by. While there is no way to protect yourself 100 percent from being bitten by a tick while in an infested area, there are some steps you can take to reduce your risk:

✔ Stay on the center of trails and paths – don't brush against vegetation if you can avoid it.

✔ Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, and tuck the legs into your socks or boots. This helps keep ticks from reaching your skin.

✔ Wear light colored and tightly woven clothing. This makes it easier to see ticks.

✔ Use repellents that contain 20% or more DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on the exposed skin for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth.

✔ Check yourself, your children and pets for ticks often. A tick is so small it can easily go unnoticed. Pay special attention to the backs of knees, behind the ears the scalp, armpits and back.

For more information about Lyme disease, please visit the NYS Department of Health website at: http://www.health.ny.gov/ diseases/communicable/lyme/ index.htm or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/lyme.

Lyme Disease Information
from
Senator Kenneth P. LaValle

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LYME DISEASE

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a bacteria (borrelia burgdorferi) that is spread by the bite of an infected tick. Lyme disease can affect the skin, joints, nervous system and/or heart.

When detected early, it usually can be treated with oral antibiotics. If left untreated, it often causes serious health problems.

How is Lyme Disease Spread?

The only way to contract Lyme disease is from the bite of an infected deer tick. Not all deer ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease; they become infected after feeding on infected animals, such as mice or other small mammals.

Transmission of Lyme disease from an infected tick does not occur until a tick has been attached and feeding for at least 24-36 hours, which is why it is important to always check for ticks after spending time outdoors.

What are the Symptoms of Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is often hard to diagnose because it has various symptoms that are seen in many other illnesses. Early symptoms appear anywhere from 3 to 30 days after the bite of an infected tick.

- In 60-80% of the cases, a red rash (erythema migrans) develops within a few days to a month later.

- The rash is at least two to six inches in diameter and may have a clearing in the center or look like a bulls-eye. The rash may last for three to five weeks.

- The rash may be accompanied by symptoms including joint pain, chills, fever and fatigue. They may seem too minor to seek medical attention.

- Severe fatigue, stiff neck, tingling or numbness in the arms and legs or facial paralysis can occur with the progression of Lyme disease.

What are the Long-Term Effects of Lyme Disease?

- Left untreated, it can spread into the central nervous system, heart and/or joints.

- Heart problems develop in less than 5% of people with Lyme disease.

- Arthritis can develop in nearly 50% of untreatevictims

- Lyme arthritis has been misdiagnosed as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis in some children.

Is There a Tick Season?

Ticks are active when the weather stays above freezing, usually from March through November. Young deer ticks or nymphs, which are about the size of a poppy seed, are active from mid-May to mid-August. Adult ticks, which are approximately the size of a sesame seed, are most active from March to mid-May and from mid-August to November. Both nymphs and adult ticks can transmit Lyme disease.

How can I reduce the number of ticks around my home?

While most of us take precautions against deer ticks when we plan to be out in the woods, you can be bitten by a tick in your own back yard as deer ticks are commonly found in lawns, shrubs and gardens.

Deer ticks can hitch a ride onto your lawn via small mammals such as mice and chipmunks; therefore, keeping your yard free of clutter and places for these anima to hide can reduce the tick population in your yard.

- Keep your grass mowed and edges trimmed.

- Move children's swing sets and other play equipment in dry, sunny areas of the yard away from the woods. Place them on a mulch or wood chip foundation.

- Keep your pets out of the woods to reduce ticks brought into the home.

- Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds around the house, at edges of the lawn and around stonewalls and woodpiles.

Senator Ken LaValle

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