

A Note from the Nurses.....

It's Tick Season!

Believe it or not we have already seen quite a few students that have been bitten by ticks this year. The Massachusetts Dept of Public Health recommends that tick repellent be used when one is outside exposed to ticks. Ticks are usually found in wooded or grassy areas. They do not fly, but can be active year round. They are most often a problem during the months between April and October. After spending time in an area likely to have ticks, remember to check yourself, your children and pets for ticks.

Ticks can spread germs and bacteria that can cause diseases such as Lyme disease. Using a tick repellent can reduce your chances of being bitten by a tick, and therefore reduce the risk that you will get one of these diseases. Tick repellent is a substance used on clothing or other surfaces, which discourages the ticks from crawling on that surface. It is important to look at the active ingredient on the product label.

Products containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or Permethrin are recommended for protection against ticks.

DEET is the active ingredient found in most repellent products. It can be used directly on exposed skin or clothing. There are over 200 products containing DEET ranging in concentration from 5% to 100%. Please read the product labels to determine the percentage of DEET included and how often it should be reapplied. DEET products should not be used on infants under 2 months of age.

Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets, and camping gear. This product should not be used on the skin. Permethrin can be applied to clothing prior to putting them on, and following the product's instructions.

Lyme Disease

Lyme Disease is caused by bacteria that is spread by tiny infected deer ticks. Symptoms of early Lyme disease can begin to appear from 3 to 30 days after being bitten by an infected deer tick. If untreated, symptoms of late Lyme disease may occur from weeks to years after the initial infection.

The most common early symptom is a rash where the tick was attached. It often starts as a small red area that spreads outward, clearing in the center so that it looks like a donut. Flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, stiff neck, sore and achy muscles and joints, fatigue and swollen glands may also occur. Even though these symptoms may go away by themselves, without medical treatment, some people will get the rash again on other parts of their bodies, and many will experience more serious problems. Treatment during the early stage of Lyme disease, prevents later more serious problems. If untreated, people with Lyme disease can develop late stage symptoms even if they initially did not have a rash. The joints, nervous system and heart are most commonly affected.

For more information on Lyme disease or other diseases spread by ticks contact the MDPH (Mass Dept of Public Health) at (617) 983-6800 or online at <http://www.mass.gov/dph>.