

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

Lyme Disease



Burlington County Health Department

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Public Health
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Burlington County Health Department
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Fact Sheet for Parents

The State of New Jersey continues to have one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the country. The disease is spread 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 fields, cut lawns or farm fields. Most Lyme disease cases are caused by tick bites acquired around the home. Children may be at particularly higher risk because of the amount of time they spend playing outdoors and the failure to recognize a tick bite. To help reduce this risk of tick exposure, remind your family of these “tick-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 and DO NOT apply to hands or face. Use products with less than 10% DEET and always follow manufacturers' directions carefully. Do not use repellents on children under 3 years of age. Pay particular attention to tops of shoes and lower portion of pant legs, as ticks are most likely to attach here.

 **While Outside:** Stay in the center of trails; avoid low bushes and leafy brush; occasionally check clothing and skin for ticks and remove.

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:

Incorrect removal of an attached tick can increase your risk for Lyme disease.
Never burn, smother or crush an

 **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 the spot of attachment, and watch for symptoms such as an expanding “bull's eye” rash, flu-like symptoms or painful joints develop. If these symptoms develop, contact your physician.

Don't Forget:

It generally takes at least 36 hours after attachment for a deer tick to infect its host with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

So remember: ***Do tick checks DAILY***

For more information, please contact the Burlington County Health Department at 609-265-5548 or visit the state website at

www.nj.gov/health

