

May 27, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Black-legged Ticks



The black-legged tick is commonly found in our area. Once temperatures rise above 4°C, ticks become active and begin to look for a blood meal, usually from mice, dogs, and deer, and sometimes people. In the spring and summer the tick is in the nymph form, and when attached to the skin is the size of a small freckle.

Some ticks (about 30% in our region) carry the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease, and can transmit the bacteria during the tick bite. As the tick feeds, it grows bigger and gets engorged with blood (see picture). Once it is slightly engorged (attached for more than 24 hours) it can transmit the bacteria if it is present.

Enjoy the outdoors and nature, and protect yourself and your family from tick bites with these tips:

- Check yourself and your family for ticks;
- Shower to remove loose ticks;
- Wear light coloured clothing so ticks can be easily spotted;
- Wear long sleeves and long pants; tuck pants into socks;
- Use insect repellent;
- Stay on pathways, trails and in mowed areas.

If you find a tick on yourself or your child:

- Remove the tick using tweezers or a tick puller. Grasp the tick by the head as close to your skin as possible. Pull on it firmly, but gently and straight out.
- Clean and disinfect the site of the bite.
- Consult your health care provider if the tick was attached for longer than 24 hours and less than 3 days. They may recommend one dose of doxycycline to decrease the risk of developing Lyme disease.
- Make a note of the date you removed the tick – early symptoms of Lyme disease appear from 3 days to 30 days following the tick bite. See your health care provider if you have a red rash with a white centre (bull's eye), fever, headache, fatigue, or muscle aches.

For more information about Lyme disease and ticks visit: www.healthunit.org, call: 1-800-660-5853, or email: contact@healthunit.org. If you have any questions about your child's health, please talk to your child's healthcare provider.

Sincerely,



Paula J Stewart MD, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health/CEO

PS/hb

Encl.