

NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jeff Golden
(608) 243-0302

Warm Weather Arrives along with Deer Ticks Time to Pay Attention to Protect against Lyme Disease

Madison WI – June 14, 2013 - It looks like the long spell of cool spring weather is finally over and we can now begin to leap into all the outdoor activities that we've been anxiously awaiting. Along with all the joys of picnics, walks through the woods and runs through the meadows, comes the advice to start paying attention to a little poppy seed sized critter that can ruin your summer. That critter is the deer tick, and the problem comes with the fact that the bite of an infected tick can give you Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is no picnic. It can affect the skin, joints, nervous system, heart and other areas of the body. The first symptom is usually the appearance of a "bull's eye" rash, which often shows up on the bite area between 3 and 30 days after a bite. Fatigue, fever, headache, chills, pain in the muscles or joints, and enlarged lymph nodes are other possible symptoms of Lyme disease..

The good news is that the disease is treatable with antibiotics. The effectiveness of the treatment can depend on how quickly treatment is started.

The other piece of good news is that there is a lot you can do to help prevent getting bitten, or help prevent infection by quick removal of the tick.

Following these steps will help **reduce the risk of a tick bite**:

- Wear long pants and long sleeves when picnicking or walking in tall grasses or forests
- Always use an effective insect repellent. Focus on spraying shoes, socks and pants.
- Always check yourself, or have a family member check you for ticks after being outdoors, paying special attention to the head, scalp, armpit, groin and area behind the knee. Don't forget to also check your pets. These timely checks are really important because if the tick has been attached for 24 hours it can start to transmit the disease.
- If you do find a tick, use thin bladed tweezers to slowly remove it. Folk remedies like petroleum jelly, nail polish remover or burning matches **DO NOT WORK**, and are not safe.

Consult a physician as soon as possible

- if a tick has been attached for 24 or more hours,
- if tick removal is incomplete
- if a "bull's eye" rash appears at the bite area
- or if you have other symptoms of Lyme disease in the weeks following the bite.

You can also do some landscaping to minimize the tick population in your yard. These strategies include:

- Frequent mowing and raking
- Clearing tall grasses and brush around your house and at the edge of your lawns
- Removing any old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide
- Stacking wood neatly and in a dry area (which discourages rodents that might be carrying Lyme disease and infect ticks that feed on them)
- Keeping playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees and placing them in a sunny location, if possible.

Careful pesticide use may be helpful in some situations. However, it is critical that you apply any pesticide according to the instructions on the label. We recommend that you consult with a licensed pest control professional if you choose to control ticks with pesticides.

If you have specific questions about potential exposure to Lyme disease, you can call a Public Health Nurse at (608) 266-4821.

For more detailed information on ticks and Lyme disease:

www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/

For more details on how to keep ticks out of you backyard,

www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/in_the_yard.html

-END-

An online version of this release is available at

www.cityofmadison.com/news/view.cfm?news_id=3892