



THE FACTS: *Lyme Disease*

What is It?

Lyme disease is caused by a germ that is spread to people by the bite of an infected deer tick. Although the disease is uncommon, infected ticks have been identified in the area of Thunder Bay.

What are the Symptoms?

Within days to weeks following the tick bite, 80% of patients will have a red, slowly expanding "bull's-eye" rash, accompanied by general tiredness, fever, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, and joint pain. If untreated, weeks to months later some patients may develop arthritis and other chronic conditions which can affect the heart and nervous system. Lyme disease is not deadly and can be treated with antibiotics.

How Does it Spread?

Ticks are tiny about the size of sesame seeds. They move about the ground slowly. Or they settle on tall vegetation until they can attach themselves to someone passing by. Ticks burrow part way into the skin, bite, draw blood, then drop off. The feeding tick's mouth will be under the skin, but the back parts will be sticking out. An infected tick can give you disease if not removed within 1-2 days. Ticks carrying lyme disease are rare in Ontario except on Long Point on the north shore of Lake Erie. It is believed that migratory birds from Long Point as well as birds from certain areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin then transport the ticks into the Thunder Bay region.

Prevention and Management of Ticks

- Cover up with light colored clothes. Wear long sleeved shirt, high socks and runners.
- Shower when you come in from outdoors, wash clothes immediately.
- Conduct daily "tick checks" - most often in hair, ears, underarms, trunk of body, groin and back of knees.
- Remove ticks - brush off unattached or remove tick gently with a pair of tweezers (pull slowly to detach entire tick). Save tick for later identification.
- Use insect repellents on clothing.
- Check pets and remove ticks.
- Keep yard clear of brush and grass cut. Place wood piles away from the house.
- A vaccine is available for those persons who live in areas where lyme disease is more common and who have frequent, prolonged exposure to tick habitats. For further information discuss with your doctor.

**For Further Information Contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.**

