

Health Unit Media Release

Date: Nov 1, 2010



Be Tick Smart during the Hunting Season

Hunting season is upon us and the **Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit would like to remind those enjoying hunting activities to be aware that they also share the great outdoors with ticks that can make them sick.** Lyme disease is caused by being bitten by an infected tick. In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, we have several different types of ticks. Lyme disease is caused by the bite of an infected black-legged tick (also known as deer ticks). There is an increasing number of areas where ticks carrying Lyme disease are found. Lyme disease is now considered endemic (regularly found) in our geographic area along the St Lawrence River. At this time, the Health Unit is unsure of how far north the endemic area reaches. Tick population is being monitored in order to establish this. **Any bite from a black legged tick has the potential to cause Lyme disease regardless of the geographic area in which the tick was “picked-up”.** If you are bitten by a tick, you should bring that tick into a health unit office to be sent for identification and testing to determine whether or not Lyme disease is a risk to you.

What can you do to minimize your exposure to ticks?

- **Wear light coloured, long sleeved shirts and long pants.** For extra protection, tuck your pants into your socks. Use bug repellent containing DEET. Read the manufacturer's instructions before applying the repellent on yourself or children.
- **When you return from the outdoors, check your entire body thoroughly for ticks.**
- **If you find an attached tick, remove it promptly using a pair of tweezers.** Grasp the tick's head and mouth parts as close to the skin as possible and pull it straight out gently, but firmly. Avoid twisting or squeezing the tick during removal. Treat the bite area with an antiseptic. Keep the tick in a small container and bring it into your nearest health unit office where it will be sent off for identification and testing for the bacteria the causes Lyme disease.

Watch for signs of infection following a tick bite.

Bites from ticks infected with Lyme disease may create a bull's-eye-like rash. The appearance of this rash is a sure sign of a tick bite and you should see your health care provider. The “bull's eye” rash will occur within one to three weeks after the bite, but can range from 3 days to one month. If you experience any of the following symptoms: a red bulls-eye rash, fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, fatigue and a skin rash, contact your health care provider's office immediately and let them know that you were bitten by a tick.

For further information on Lyme Disease, please contact the Health Unit at 613-345-5685 or our Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org.