

Health Unit Media Release

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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 the bite of an infected black-legged tick (deer tick) that has been attached for at least 24 hours. Black-legged ticks require the blood of the person or animal that it is biting to be capable of transferring the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, there are an increasing number of areas where the black-legged tick carrying Lyme disease can be found. **Any bite from an infected black legged tick that has been attached for a minimum of 24 hours has the potential to cause Lyme disease regardless of the geographic area in which the tick was “picked-up.”**

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, showering right away will help to remove loose ticks off your body.**
- **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 squeezing the tick during removal. Treat the bite area with an antiseptic.
- **If the black-legged tick has been attached for more than 24 hours and is engorged (fed/taken a blood meal) you should visit your health care provider within 72 hours of removing the tick for a medical assessment.**

Be aware of signs of infection following a tick bite.

Bites from ticks infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease may result in a red rash that may appear within three days and up to a month after the bite. A bull's eye rash may be present in the area of the bite. Symptoms of Lyme disease may include fever, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint pain. These symptoms may disappear, but if left untreated Lyme disease can progress to affect the nervous system, joints and the heart. If you develop symptoms of Lyme disease consult your health care provider 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.

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Contact: Joan Mays, Manager of Community Health Protection, 613-345-5685.