

## 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). Lyme disease is regularly found within our geographic area of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

A tick must be attached to you for at least 24-36 hours in order to transmit Lyme disease. A tick that was attached for less than 24 hours, even if it did carry the bacteria, could not transmit Lyme disease because it was not attached long enough. If a tick is attached for longer than 24 hours, and removed within the past 72 hours then it is important to contact a health care provider.

### 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 including your scalp.**
- **If you find an attached tick, remove it promptly using a pair of tweezers or a tick remover.** 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. Quick removal of a tick will prevent you from getting lyme disease.

**Reminder: On July 1, 2014 the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit stopped accepting ticks to send away for surveillance testing.** Our surveillance program now consists of an active surveillance strategy where we will look for and collect ticks from areas where they may be emerging.

The change in how surveillance is done will not affect clinical care. Testing of ticks was not intended for the purpose of diagnosing disease; rather it was a tool for surveillance. Even if the tick was positive for the bacteria, it did not mean the tick transmitted the bacteria to the individual. The length of time the tick is attached is a key factor in the transmission of Lyme disease. Remember that if a tick is attached for longer than 24 hours and removed within the past 72 hours then it is important to contact a health care provider.

**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](http://www.healthunit.org). You can also like our facebook page for important public health updates.**