

HEALTH ROOM NEWS

Lyme's Disease – Watch out for those ticks!

Lyme's disease is a bacterial infection that is spread through the bite of a deer tick. Ticks search for host animals from the tips of grasses and shrubs (not trees) and transfer to animals or persons that brush against the vegetation. Ticks only crawl; they do not fly or jump. The risk of exposure to ticks is greatest in the woods and garden fringe areas of properties, but ticks may also be carried by animals into lawns and gardens. Deer ticks typically feed on deer, mice, birds and other small mammals.

Warning signs of Lyme's disease include: fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, muscle and joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, achiness, and a red bulls-eye rash at the area of the bite.

Lyme's disease can be treated with antibiotics. Early treatment usually results in a full recovery. If not treated, Lyme's Disease can cause arthritis, heart damage, or nervous system abnormalities.

Tick control is the key to prevention. Remove leaves and clear brush and tall grass from around your house and at the edge of gardens. Avoid tick-infested areas. Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks can be spotted more easily. Tuck pant legs into socks and shirts into pants. Tape areas where pants and socks meet so ticks can not crawl under clothing. Spray insect repellent containing DEET on clothing and exposed skin other than face. Wear a hat and a long-sleeved shirt for added protection. Finally, walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush.