

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Date: June 7, 2021
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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM TICKS THIS SUMMER

GRANT COUNTY: As summer comes upon us, the Grant County Health Department would like to remind residents to routinely check for ticks after being outdoors. Prompt checking for and removal of ticks before they become embedded can prevent transmission of Lyme Disease.

Deer ticks are the most common carrier of Lyme Disease in Wisconsin. The highest density of deer ticks in Wisconsin is in the western half of the state. Deer ticks are among the first ticks to become active in the spring and remain active (in various stages of the life cycle) until the first snow falls in the fall.

Prevention of Lyme Disease involves protecting yourself from exposure to ticks before they have the chance to transmit Lyme Disease. The following suggestions are offered to protect yourself and your family from Lyme Disease:

- 1) Conduct thorough tick checks on yourself, your children, and your pets after spending time outdoors. Ticks do not fly or jump onto their hosts. They wait atop grasses and other vegetation until an animal brushes against them. Then they cling to the skin, hair, or clothing. Remove any ticks you find as soon as possible.
- 2) Wear light colored clothing. This may not deter ticks, but it makes them easier to see.
- 3) Tuck pants into boots or socks; wear long-sleeved shirts, buttoned at the cuff.
- 4) Apply tick / insect repellent to pants, socks, and shoes. Products containing 30% DEET or permethrin are very effective in repelling deer ticks. If you use these types of products, be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions on the label.
- 5) Walk in the center of mowed trails to avoid brushing up against vegetation.

6) Fogging or spraying an area with insecticides are not practical means of tick control. Mowing grass around your home or out buildings may make the area unattractive to ticks, thereby decreasing their numbers in the area.

The mouthparts of a tick are shaped like tiny barbs. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with a tweezers as close to the skin as possible, and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Then wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water and apply an antiseptic to the bite site. If tweezers aren't available, grasp the tick with a piece of tissue. Do not twist or jerk the tick because the head may remain embedded, which can lead to general infection at the bite site. If the head or mouthparts do break off, consult your doctor about removing them.

Adult ticks remain on deer and other mammals through the fall and winter. If you spend a lot of time outdoors during this period, be sure to check yourself, your family, and your pets for ticks. If you hunt or trap, check areas where you catch your game for ticks that may have fallen off.

Recently, there has been information regarding a new vaccine on the market for Lyme Disease. Grant County Health Department does have this new vaccine available.

For more information on Lyme Disease, contact the Grant County Health Department at (608) 723-6416.