



ALLEGHENY TOWNSHIP

WESTMORELAND COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

Hazard Alert Letter – Allegheny Township **Ticks as a Vector for Lyme Disease**

It's that time of year again. Grass is growing, birds are chirping, and ticks are abundantly awaiting a host. Nasty isn't it? Being one of those less fortunate hosts for a tick can be life changing. Please take the time to read, understand, and act. The health of your family, friends, and co-workers depend on you.

Who's at risk? We all are but here is a heightened list provided by the U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA Information Bulletin: Construction Work, Landscaping, Brush Clearing, Land Surveying, Farming, Railroad Work, Oil Field Work, Utility Line Work, and Park/Wildlife Management, Police, Fire, and EMS.

If you spend time outdoors fishing from shore, hiking, hunting, gardening, walking on trails or have pets prone to picking up ticks and bringing them indoors you need to take precautions now. Did you know the white footed mouse is likely one of the initial hosts for a tick looking for a meal?

It is very important that you keep alert for a "bulls-eye" rash, although 20-40% of persons who have the disease do not present with a rash. Other signs and symptoms may be non-specific and cause flu like symptoms (e.g., fever, lymph node swelling, neck stiffness, headaches, migrating joint or muscle aches). It is very important early in the disease process that Lyme is treated with antibiotics. Untreated or inadequately treated cases may result in arthritis, muscle pain, heart disease, brain, and nerve disorders that are severe, chronic, and disabling.

Prevention of Lyme Disease

- Avoid Tick Habitat (brushy, overgrown grassy, and wooded areas)
- Removal of leaves, tall grass, and brush from work areas to reduce deer and rodent habitat.
- Application of tick-toxic chemicals to surrounding work or residential areas in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Creating and deploying Tick Tubes.

Personal Protection

- Wear light colored clothing. (To easily see ticks.)
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts tucked in, tucking pants into socks or boots. (To delay ticks from reaching your skin.)
- Wearing a hat.
- Using appropriate insect repellants on non-facial skin and permethrin on clothes (kills ticks).
- Showering and washing/drying clothes at high temperature after outdoor exposure.
- Doing a careful body check for ticks, prompt full removal if attached, and skin cleansing with antiseptic.
- Seek medical care.

Lyme Disease is miserable. It is our hope that this information reaches those who can make an impact, strive for prevention, and leverage best practices.



References:

1. www.cdc.gov/Lyme
2. SHIB02-11 Safety and Health Information Bulletin: Potential for Occupational Exposure to Lyme Disease.