

April 12, 2011

Dear School Nurses,

Enclosed is tick information for your staff and families. I thought the information would be useful. I removed my name so you can paste in your own name and make copies.

I have led a Lyme Disease Support Group for over ten years in my home town of Long Valley. I am very open to phone calls and questions from nurses, staff, and families from any area. 908-963-0257.

If you have the opportunity to explore the complexity of Tick-borne diseases, you will better enable yourself to advocate for your students and communities and the well being of your districts.

Providing education to the public is crucial in helping prevent tick related illness.

The Morris County School Nurse Association last year presented an after-school workshop presented by Pat Smith, President of the Lyme Disease Association. The evaluations indicated a positive response to the presentation and the program was highly rated.

Thank you for your time.

Nancy Braithwaite RN, BSN, NJ-CSN
School Nurse - Long Valley
Morris County
MCSNA President

From the School Nurse.....

Some Tick Talk :

- *New Jersey has one of the highest rates of Lyme Disease (tick-borne illnesses).
- *All ticks can transmit Lyme Disease (not necessarily limited to deer ticks).
- *Increased incidence of Lyme Disease is partially attributed to the population explosion in the rural areas.
- *Keep wood and brush away from your house. Stone walls attract small rodents which can also carry ticks. Bird feeders also increase the incidence of ticks.
- *Avoid pets on furniture and sleeping with kids. Ticks can travel from your furry animal onto the skin of your family.
- *Avoid tick infested areas and sitting directly on the ground. Use EPA approved repellents.
- ***Frequent tick checks are probably your best protection from tick-borne illnesses. Removing ticks before they adhere to the skin, prevents the transmission of infection.**
- *Remember to protect (repellent) and check pets too!
- *Teach children to seek adult help for tick removal.
- *Squeezing the body of the tick can actually increase the chance of transmitting infectious material into the person who is bit by the tick.
- *Improper removal can increase the chances of infectious transmission of tick fluids and thus developing Lyme Disease and related tick-borne illnesses. Never put substances on the tick such as soap or other substances.
- ***Use a fine point tweezer and grasp tick mouth parts (place of attachment—as close to the skin as possible). Remove the tick with a steady pull away from the skin. Use a steady pressure and gently pull the tick straight out. Never squeeze, twist, or yank the body of a tick. Never put substances or fluids on the tick.**
- *If you save the tick for testing, place it in a sealed plastic bag with a moistened (water) cotton ball. If a tick is positive, a course of antibiotics is indicated---see the doctor.
- *Tick testing labs include:
 1. IgeneX Labs, Palo Alto, CA (800) 832-3200
 2. MDL, Mt. Laurel, NJ (877) 269-0090
 3. NJ Labs, New Brunswick, NJ (732) 249-0148

Continued.....

- *Some Lyme literate specialists feel that testing ticks may not always be 100% accurate.
- *Disinfect tweezers.
- *Wash hands thoroughly.
- *If discarding tick, wrap in toilet tissue and flush into toilet.
- *Don't touch tick with bare hands.
- *Clean area of the tick bite with an antiseptic and apply antibiotic ointment.
- *Contact your doctor.
- *Mark your calendar on the day of the tick removal.
- *Be alert that some reports and researchers state that less than 40% of people develop a rash (bulls-eye) after a tick bite.
- *Many rashes that do develop after exposure to infectious tick bites may not present as the "classical bulls-eye" rash. You may see a solid red rash – possibly 3" diameter or larger, and may be smaller, too. Consult your medical professional as needed.
- *Some people with dark skin may have a "bruise-like" appearance when developing a rash.
- *New research supports 6 weeks of antibiotic therapy for Lyme Disease. Other tick-borne illnesses may also be transmitted from one tick bite. They include ehrlichiosis, bartonella, and babesiosis. Ask your doctor about these other diseases. They should be assessed and treated promptly.
- *Taking advantage of the "window of opportunity" for treatment of Lyme Disease can mean the difference between wellness and illness and the avoidance of an unknown course of chronic illness.
- *It may be advisable to treat tick bites when there is:
 1. a large rash or bulls-eye rash
 2. an engorged tick upon removal
 3. tick bite in an endemic area with high incidence of lyme and tick-borne illness
 4. history of immune-suppressed state of health

If fever or flu-like illness develops within 4 weeks after a known tick bite, consider treatment for Lyme Disease! Flu-like symptoms include fatigue, malaise, achy, fever, headache, swollen glands or joints, and chills.

Other tick-borne diseases are Babesia, Anaplasma, Ehrlichia, and Bartonella. Ask your doctor to check for these other infections that may be transmitted along with Lyme.

Log onto www.lymediseaseassociation.org for more information and other websites.

Above information taken from various Lyme Disease Publications/Pamphlets.

Nurses

I am available for any concerns or questions and you may give my phone number to any staff or parent and anyone needing assistance. My number is 908-963-0257. Leave a message and I will return all calls.

Ps. Marieit would be great if we could send out the tick talk through the Honeywell alert system.

Nancy Braithwaite OFRS