



# PIKE COUNTY TICK BORNE DISEASES TASK FORCE

A Committee of the Pike County Commissioners Office

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## Tick Borne Diseases (TBD): Basic Information for Parents

### *The Fundamentals*

**Lyme disease is NOT the only infection associated with a tick bite.** A tick bite can potentially harbor diverse microbial pathogens such as: Anaplasmosis, Borrelia Burgdorferi (Lyme disease) Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Ehrlichiosis, Powassan virus, Tularemia and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. A negative test result for one organism does not rule out the possibility of being infected with other tick related pathogens.

➤ *This is why it important that your pediatrician have the lab perform a broad scan of all tick related pathogens.*

The entire northeast United States is regarded as an endemic area for tick borne diseases. According to the CDC, between 2001 - 2010, reported cases of Lyme disease were most frequent among children aged 5 - 14.

For tick borne diseases to exist in an area, three elements must be present: high relative humidity at ground level, ticks that carry and transmit pathogens, and animals that provide blood meals for the ticks.

- ☛ Ticks are parasites that feed on animal and human blood. Ticks crawl. They cannot fly or jump.
- ☛ Ticks live in moist and humid environments, particularly in or near wooded or grassy areas.
- ☛ Ticks can be active on days when the ground temperatures are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ☛ Peak time of year for tick activity is from late March to mid-October.



### *How Tick Borne Diseases are Transmitted*

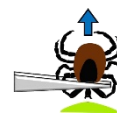
Once a tick becomes infected with tick borne pathogens they can spread it to humans or animals by biting them. The tiny tick can be attached to your body for hours to days while it engorges itself with blood. As it feeds, its body slowly enlarges. If infected, the tick transmits pathogens into the blood stream. Nymphal ticks are the primary source for transmitting tick borne diseases to humans as they are rarely noticed because of their size (less than 2 mm). Your child may not be aware that he/she was bitten.

### *Prevention is Key*

- Wear light colored clothing: long-sleeve shirt tucked into pants, long pants tucked into socks, closed footwear, and a hat. It will keep ticks away from your child's skin and make it easier to spot a tick on clothing. Use repellent on exposed skin and clothing. The CDC recommends repellents containing 10 - 20% DEET for children. (Do not allow young children to apply insect repellent to themselves. Repellents should not be used on children under 2 months of age.) ALWAYS FOLLOW PRODUCT LABEL INSTRUCTIONS WHEN APPLYING ANY REPELLENT!
- Avoid taking short cuts through thick brush and grass. Refrain from touching wild animals.
- Remove any attached ticks as soon as possible. Gear (i.e., backpacks) should be checked before bringing into your home. Remember to check pets, too.
- After being outdoors, bathe or shower. Check your child for ticks. Favorite places ticks like to go include areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, inside navel, armpits, neck, along the hairline and behind the ears. Remove any attached ticks as soon as possible.
- Wash clothes (to remove repellent) and put into the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.

### *How to Remove a Tick*

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not squeeze or twist the tick.
3. Put the tick in a sealed bag/container and send it for testing.
4. After the tick has been removed, wash the area of the tick bite and your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap.



### *Have Ticks Tested*

If the tick can be saved, after removal from your child, it can be tested for the presence of tick borne pathogens. There are labs throughout Pennsylvania that perform tick testing, such as the *Northeast Wildlife DNA Laboratory* at East Stroudsburg University.\*

### *Symptoms of Tick Borne Diseases*

Every tick bite does *not* always reveal the classical bull's eye lesion. A suspected tick bite should be examined by a doctor without delay. The majority of tick borne diseases can be readily treated especially in the very early stages. In children, the early stage of tick borne diseases are usually marked by one or more of the following symptoms: fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle or joint pain, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, rash, loss of appetite, swollen glands. If you find a tick attached to your child's skin or your child has symptoms, consult your pediatrician immediately!!!

- Lyme disease is known as "The Great Imitator" because it can mimic almost any disease. Remember: It is okay to get a second opinion.

### *Tick Borne Diseases and Education: It's the Law*

All states have their own special education laws, but, there are also federal laws that protect students with Tick Borne Diseases. The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) deals with all students who have some form of disability. Students with Tick Borne Diseases may not be able to participate in regular educational programs and require special educational programs.

To become an active participant in the decision-making process for your child, you will need to obtain a copy of your state's special education code. Check state law and school district special education policies. Talk with the Principal and/or School Superintendent.

### *Resources on Tick Borne Diseases and Insect Repellents*

#### *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

- <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html>

#### *Lyme Disease Association, Inc. (DA)*

- <https://www.lymediseaseassociation.org>

#### *National Institutes of Health (NIH)*

- <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/lymeDisease/Pages/history.aspx>

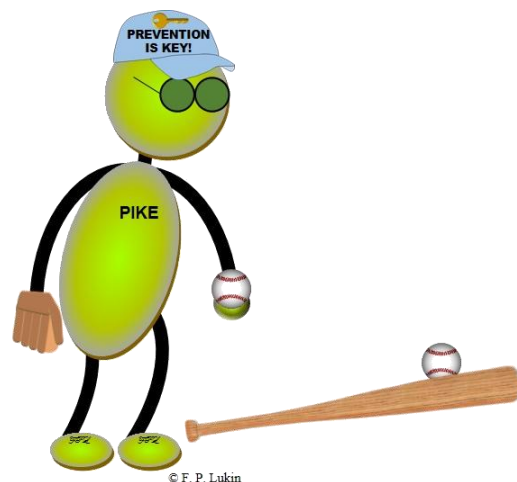
#### *National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)*

- <http://npic.orst.edu/health/child.html>

#### *\*Northeast Wildlife DNA Laboratory*

562 Independence Road, Suite 114  
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania 18301  
Phone # 855-812-0469

- <https://www.lymeaidkit.com>



**Disclaimer:** This informational sheet is for *general knowledge only*. Reference to a product or company does not constitute an endorsement. This does *NOT* substitute for medical advice. If you think your child or you may have a tick borne disease, please contact your doctor. For issues involving animals, talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to protect your pets from ticks.