

LYME DISEASE PREVENTION TIPS

Who is at risk for Lyme disease?

Outdoor workers, gardeners, campers, hikers, people who hunt or fish, golfers who stray into the rough, people who live in the city but go for a picnic in a park or children on a school outing are all at risk. Children are especially vulnerable since they tend to run and play without caution. Deer ticks like cool, moist environments, such as leaf litter, tall grass around the edge of yards, wooded areas, or roadsides. Many infections occur within the home yard.

Deer bring ticks into your yard and reducing deer numbers can help in reducing tick numbers. Birds and other animals also help transport ticks. Mice are a reservoir of multiple disease-causing microorganisms and often have many deer ticks attached to them. A tick seeking a blood meal will bite a mouse, infecting the tick. Other infections transmitted at the same time as Lyme disease include Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Ehrlichiosis, Mycoplasmosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Ticks are described as a cesspool of disease. The spring and summer months are the "Prime Time for Lyme," however you can be bitten year-round. Ticks are active anytime the temperature is high enough for them to be mobile, even below freezing.

Personal prevention tips

Avoid sitting directly on the ground, stonewalls, woodpiles or fallen logs; use an impervious ground cover. Walk in the center of trails. Check yourself for ticks periodically while in tick-infested areas.

Clothing

Wear light-colored long pants, long sleeved shirts and closely knitted socks. Tuck your shirt into pants and tuck pants into your socks. This will help prevent a tick from crawling under your clothing and getting to your skin. Wear a hat to protect your head.

Rynoskin™ protective underwear is made of a closely knitted but breathable stretch fabric that ticks have difficulty penetrating. It is especially helpful for hunters and anyone outdoors when the weather is cooler. It is available in long sleeved tops, long bottoms, socks, hoods, and gloves.

Permethrin tick insecticide

Permethrin is a synthetic chemical developed to simulate the natural chemical pyrethrum that protects plants from insect attack. It will kill insects and deer ticks. Spray your boots, socks, pants, sleeves, gloves, and hat with permethrin. Apply it outdoors, and do not apply it to your skin. Treated clothing can be worn when dry. One treatment lasts 2-6 weeks. Follow all label directions carefully. Insect Shield®, permethrin-pretreated outdoor clothing, is available and effective through 70 washings.

Skin protection

Insect repellents containing DEET can be used on skin or clothing. It is suggested to use repellents with less than 10% DEET on the skin of children. Repellents should be applied to the skin carefully. Follow label instructions and avoid getting the repellent in the eyes or mouth. Higher concentrations provide longer protection. Ultrathon™ time-release formulations with extended protection are available.

Non-DEET repellants, including BioUD™ and Natrapel®, are available. A number of plant oils are reported to be tick repellants.

After returning indoors

Perform a careful tick check after returning indoors. Deer ticks are tiny and difficult to see. If possible, have someone else inspect you.

Be sure to check your hairline and waistline. Parents should check children whenever they have been outdoors. Shower using a washcloth immediately to remove any unattached ticks.

Remove attached ticks as soon as detected using fine pointed tweezers or tick removal tool. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull gently straight out. Do not put petroleum jelly, alcohol, soap, lit match or cigarette, etc. on the tick. Any irritation might cause the tick to regurgitate the Lyme bacteria into you. Save the tick in a plastic bag or vial with a moistened cotton ball for identification and testing. After removing the tick, call your doctor promptly and consider requesting immediate antibiotic treatment. If the tick is infected early diagnosis and appropriate treatment is key to recovery. Delay will allow the infection to disseminate into tissue in the body where treatment is often less effective.

Keep outdoor clothes in the garage or shed as ticks can migrate from clothing brought indoors and invade the home. You can also wash and dry your clothes immediately. Some people put the clothes in a trash bag then spray with permethrin and tie up the bag. This should kill the ticks or other insects before washing. Washing alone will not kill ticks, but a 30-minute hot cycle in a dryer will kill ticks.

Damminix® tick tubes

Damminix® tubes are small paper tubes containing permethrin-treated cotton balls. Placed in mice habitats the cotton is used for nesting material. Permethrin kills ticks on the mice.

Have a great DEER TICK-FREE year outdoors.

Mention of brand names does not constitute endorsements by LDASEPA. The information here is not intended to be a substitute for sound medical advice from your physician.

Rynoskin™: Available from www.rynoskin.com

Permethrin: Clothing spray available under several brand names including Sawyer, Duranon, Permanone, etc. and can be found in outdoor retail stores' in the camping section or online.

Insect Shield®: Available from ExOfficio, LL Bean, Orvis, REI, etc. or online.

BioUD™: Available from www.homs.com/bioud.html

Natrapel®: Available from online outdoor stores, e.g., www.rei.com/product/770010

DEET: Sprays and wipes are widely available under many brands including OFF®, Deep Woods OFF®, Cutter© Backwoods, time-release Ultrathon™, etc.

Yard spraying: Available from lawn and yard care businesses like Bartlett Tree Experts, etc. Homeowner hose-on applicators are also available from Home Depot, Lowes, etc.

Damminix® tick tubes: Available from some home and garden stores and www.ticktubes.com/

Distributed by:

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