

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



September 14, 2009



Safety Tips: Tricks to Avoid Ticks



Did you ever wonder where the name of Lyme disease originated? I haven't, and I just know that I didn't want to be exposed to the rascals. But, the name originated from a town in Connecticut in 1975. The disease is transmitted by a closely related group of ticks called *ixodes*.

This group of ticks - deer ticks, western black-legged ticks and black legged ticks are much smaller than the common dog or cattle ticks. They normally attach to any part of the body, often to moist or hairy areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 23,305 cases of Lyme disease in the USA in 2005. Most of the cases were in the coastal northeast, the Mid-Atlantic States, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and northern California.

The large majority of cases occur in the summer months when people are more active and spend more time outdoors. The Food and Drug Administration regulates products that are used to diagnose and treat this complex disease in humans. At this juncture, there are no licensed vaccines in the USA to aid in the prevention of Lyme disease in people.

## SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE:

- Fever and chills
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Muscle and joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Skin rash called Erythema Migrans

### If left untreated, the infection can cause:

- Joint infection
- Heart infection
- Nervous system damage

Lyme disease is rarely fatal, but it can leave a person with permanent damage to any of the areas mentioned above. I have a friend who contracted Lyme disease walking in the woods in New York State. The problem is that the symptoms may not show up for weeks or months. When they do, it may take the form of arthritis, heart rhythm irregularities, or nervous system abnormalities.

## TREATMENT:

According to the CDC, patients treated with antibiotics in the early stages of the infection usually recover rapidly and completely. Antibiotics commonly used for treatment include doxycycline, amoxicillin, or cefuroxime (ceftin). Some patients with certain neurological or cardiac forms of the illness may require intravenous treatment with drugs such as ceftriaxone or penicillin.

The National Institutes of Health funded studies of longer courses

of antibiotics for patients with some chronic symptoms several months after successful antibiotic therapy. Longer courses of antibiotic treatment have not been shown to be beneficial and have in fact been linked to serious complications, even death.

## TRICKS TO AVOID TICKS:

- Know the danger! The tick is a tiny, eight-legged insect-like creature that feeds on the blood of animals, including human beings. It is mostly harmless, but it does spread the bacteria that are responsible for Lyme disease. The deer tick, which is the main carrier, is about the size of the dot at the end of this sentence.
- Know the treatment! If Lyme disease is diagnosed early and treated with antibiotics, it can be cured. It can also be treated effectively in its latter stages, but response varies from one patient to the next. Some symptoms can linger for years.
- When you are working or walking in grassy or wooded areas, cover up! Wear solid shoes, tuck your pants leg bottoms into your socks, with a long sleeve shirt and hat or cap.
- Use insect repellants containing DEET or permethrin. Follow instructions for use on the label.
- Check yourself regularly when working outdoors and when you are taking a break.
- After work check your body, shower and wash your hair.
- If you find a tick on your body, remove it with tweezers or with your fingers protected by a glove or a plastic bag. Pull it out gently without squeezing it. Wash the area thoroughly afterwards.
- Dispose of the tick where it will not re-infect. If you suspect Lyme disease, put the tick in a sealed plastic bag or old medicine bottle and take it to the doctor.
- Watch for early signs of Lyme disease infection. A red rash, especially surrounding the tick bite, possibly in a "bull's eye" pattern may appear in the first week or two.
- Flu-like symptoms and joint pain develop over the first month. Extreme fatigue, a stiff and aching neck, and tingling in the fingers and facial paralysis can follow. Weeks or months later severe headaches, painful arthritis, heart problems and central nervous system difficulties can occur.

## PETS:

Pets can contract Lyme disease as well as humans. Their symptoms include lameness, loss of appetite, fever, and joint soreness. Regular checks for ticks and the use of topical and/or collar products can help control contracting Lyme disease.

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Excerpts: Safety Smart Online, (4/8/2009)

<http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/lymedisease062707.html>

**The safest RISK is the one you didn't take!!**  
**~ BE SAFETY SMART RIGHT FROM THE START ~**