

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips: Protect  
Yourself from Ticks*

Spring is just around the corner. With the spring comes a host of different encounters than we experience in the winter. The one in particular that we need to be aware of is **TICKS!** These pesky little jokers can cause a world of hurt if we don't check ourselves for them after we have been outside.

One can contract Lyme disease from deer ticks and the western black-legged ticks that have been infected with Lyme disease bacteria. Lyme disease cannot be transmitted to another person.

## What are Ticks?

- Ticks are tiny, eight-legged creatures that may be no bigger than a pinhead until they become adults.
- The kind of ticks that we have to be concerned with are "deer" ticks and the "western black-legged" ticks, which can transmit the disease to humans and animals.
- Deer ticks and western black-legged ticks are found in many states, but are more prevalent in the Northeast, the North Central part of the country and northern California.
- They are often found in large numbers in brushy, woody and overgrown grassy areas. However, they can be found on rodents, pets, and other animals in other locations, including the inside of buildings.
- These ticks feed on blood by inserting their mouthparts into a person's skin. As they feed, their bodies began to enlarge.
- Deer ticks and western black-legged ticks may attach to any part of the body, but most times they attach to hidden and hairy areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp.
- Because they are so small, they can feed on a person's body without being noticed.

## What is Lyme Disease?

- Some deer ticks and western black-legged ticks transmit bacterial infections. The most well-known of these is called **LYME Disease**.
- Although deaths from Lyme disease are very rare, it can result in serious health effects if it isn't treated early.
- Lyme disease is transmitted by deer ticks and western black-legged ticks that have been infected with the Lyme disease bacteria. You can get Lyme disease if you are bitten by one of these ticks, but you cannot get it from another person, neither can you transmit it to another person. Also you can't get it from a pet or another animal.

## DO:

- Stay out of tick-infested areas as much as possible especially during the spring and summer months.
- Wear light-colored clothing, a hat, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, socks and good sturdy boots or shoes. Tuck the shirt in your pants and your pants in your socks.
- Use an insect repellent contained with DEET or permethrin.
- Read the label and apply as directed.
- Be sure to do a body inspection each time you return from outside activities.

## Lyme Disease Symptoms-

- ✓ Over 15,000 cases of Lyme disease are reported each year in the USA, but all of them aren't reported.
- ✓ The reason being that the symptoms of Lyme disease are very similar to those of many other flu-like illnesses. It can be hard to recognize.
- ✓ If you have been in an area with ticks or think you have been bitten by a tick, watch out for these possible early symptoms of Lyme disease: a rash or red patch, especially one that enlarges over a few days (the center of the rash may clear as it enlarges, giving it a bulls-eye appearance); fatigue; a mild headache; pain and stiffness in the muscles and joints; a slight fever; or swollen glands.
- ✓ The symptoms indicating later stages of Lyme disease may include; arthritis, especially on and off swelling and pain in the knees; neurological problems, such as facial paralysis or inflammation of the nerves, or heart problems.
- ✓ If you think that you may have Lyme disease, talk to your supervisor about seeing a doctor. Lyme disease can be treated effectively with antibiotics when it is diagnosed early.

*I have 2 friends that both contracted Lyme disease, both failing to check themselves until it was too late. Both are partially disabled as a result of this Lyme disease.*

## Preventive Tips for Lyme Disease-

- Stay out of suspect tick-infested areas as much as possible.
- Wear light-colored clothing if you will be in an area that may have ticks. Also wear a hat, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, socks, and sturdy shoes or boots. Tuck your shirt inside your pants and tuck your pants inside your socks.
- Use an insect repellent that contains DEET or permethrin. Read the label carefully and then apply as directed.
- If you should spot any ticks on your skin or your clothing, remove them quickly as possible. The best way to remove a tick that is embedded in your skin is to use small tweezers to grasp it where its mouth parts entered the skin. If you aren't able to extract it, call for medical help as soon as possible. Wash the bite area and then wash your hands with soap and water.
- If you are bitten by a tick, save it in a moist piece of paper inside a jar. Label the jar with the date, the location where you picked up the tick, and where you found it on your body.

## DON'T:

- Panic if you're bitten by a tick. But remove it as quickly as possible, making sure that its mouthparts do not remain in your skin.
- Forget to do a self-inspection each time you return from brushy, wooded areas.
- Hesitate to remind your fellow workers to do the same self-inspection as they return from outside activities.
- Visit tick-infested areas any more than you have to.

**AVOID LYME DISEASE**

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**INSPECT YOUR BODY THOROUGHLY**