



# Erie County Health Department

## Tick Bite Information Sheet

### Why are ticks a public health concern?

- Ticks are small insects that can be found along woodland edges, in woods, tall grass, weeds and underbrush. Some diseases can be transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected tick.
- In Ohio, there are three types of ticks that carry disease:



The American dog tick (most common): can carry bacteria that cause Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF). In 2011, there were 21 confirmed cases of RMSF in Ohio.



The Lone Star tick (typically found in Southern Ohio): can carry bacteria that cause ehrlichiosis. In 2011, there were 5 confirmed cases of ehrlichiosis in Ohio.



The black-legged deer tick (previously very rare but has been found in several counties in Eastern Ohio): can carry bacteria that cause Lyme disease. In 2011, there were 53 confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Ohio.

- It is important to remember that not all ticks are infected and that ticks must bite and remain attached for hours in order to transmit diseases. Prompt removal of an attached tick will significantly reduce the risk of infection.

### How can I prevent a tick bite?

- Tuck your pants into your socks to keep the ticks away from your skin.
- Wear light-colored clothing. This will make it easier to find crawling ticks.

- Use repellents, such as 20 percent DEET, and follow label instructions carefully.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents. It remains protective for several washings.
- Check for ticks frequently, especially on children and pets.
- Shower within two hours of coming indoors to prevent ticks from attaching.

### **What should I do if I have been bitten by a tick?**

- Remove the tick using a pair of tweezers by pulling upward with steady, even pressure. Clean the area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Write down the day you were exposed to the tick. If you develop symptoms of tick-borne disease with a few weeks of a tick bite, notify your doctor. Treatments and antibiotics are available for most tick-borne diseases if they are identified shortly after symptoms occur. Common symptoms include fever, flu-like illness, muscle or joint pain, or rash (in the case of Lyme disease, rash might resemble a bulls-eye).
- If you are concerned about the risk of infection, you can send the tick to be identified and/or tested to see if it is infected. Identification will help determine whether the tick is the kind that can carry disease but will not tell you if the tick is infected with a bacteria. Testing will both identify the tick and determine if it is infected.
  - The C. Wayne Ellett Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic (PPDC) at the Ohio State University Extension offers identification services for a fee of approximately \$20\*. Results are typically available between 3 days and 5 weeks. Instructions for submission are available at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/pdf/2121.pdf>.
  - Clongen, a commercial laboratory, offers identification and testing services for a fee of approximately \$75\*. Results are typically available in 1-3 business days. Instructions for submission are available at [http://www.clongen.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=177](http://www.clongen.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=177).

*\*As of June 2013. Fees are subject to change.*