

Tick-Borne Disease Prevention Program

INTRODUCTION

Hudson Valley Community College employees working outdoors, especially in areas with tall grasses, shrubs, low hanging branches, or leaf mold are susceptible to being bitten by a tick. There are several diseases which can be carried by ticks, with the most well-known in this area being Lyme disease. This document provides information about tick-borne illnesses, how to prevent tick bites and what to do if you find a tick on you.

BACKGROUND

Lyme Disease is a

- x Babesiosis (a malaria like infection)
- x Colorado Tick Fever (generally in the western United States including the coast)
- x Ehrlichiosis
- x Relapsing Fever (most common in the western United States)
- x Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (throughout the United States but most prevalent in the east)
- x Tick Paralysis
- x Tularemia (rabbit fever)

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

The best way to prevent tick borne diseases is to avoid tick bites. There are several things you can do which will lessen your chance of being bitten:

- x Wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt. Tuck your shirt into your pants. Tuck your pants into your socks or boots, or use tape to close the opening where they meet.
- x Wear a hat, and tie back long hair
- x Use an EPA approved insect repellent or arachnicide (pesticide) which is effective for ticks, such as DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or pyrethrin. Be sure to heed all precautionary information, and be aware that some people are sensitive to these chemicals.
- x Wear light colored clothing so that a tick can be seen more easily.
- x Change clothes when you return from an area where ticks may be located.
- x Shower as soon as possible to wash off and find any loose ticks.

FINDING TICKS

Check clothing for ticks on a frequent basis when working outdoors. When you return from an area where ticks may be located, check all of your body for ticks. Be sure to include:

- x Parts that bend (back of knee, between fingers and toes, underarms).
- x Pressure points where clothing presses against skin (underwear elastic, belts, neck).
- x Other common areas (belly button, around or in ear, hairline, top of head).

Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and gear. Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill any remaining ticks.

TICK REMOVAL

Be sure to remove unattached ticks promptly. Attached ticks are promptly removed using fine pointed tweezers:

- x The mouth parts of the tick are grasped with the tweezers as close to the skin as possible;
- x Apply firm steady pressure upward until the tick releases - do not jerk, twist, squash or squeeze the tick;
- x Clean the wound and the tweezers with an antiseptic.
- x Do not use petroleum jelly or nail polish remover, or prick or burn the tick, these actions can cause infected secretions to enter the wound.
- x Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container,