

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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PREVENT LYME DISEASE

Springtime beckons us to get out of the house and enjoy the outdoors. Activities outdoors, however, may bring us in contact with ticks and some tick bites may result in Lyme disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2013 there were 36,307 cases of Lyme disease in the U.S. Pennsylvania led all states with 5,758 cases.



Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by the bite of Ixodes ticks, also known as deer ticks. Symptoms of Lyme disease begin in the first few weeks and include fatigue, chills and fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, and swollen lymph glands. The most distinctive symptom is a bull's eye shaped red skin rash that has a dark red area in the center and usually

appears three days to one month after the bite. Some individuals, however, develop the symptoms without the rash.

Late onset symptoms of Lyme disease may not appear until weeks, months or even years after a tick bite. The most common is Lyme arthritis, which appears as short bouts of pain and swelling, especially in the knees. Other late-occurring symptoms involve the nervous system and heart.

Blood tests can determine if someone has antibodies to the Lyme disease bacteria. Oral antibiotics cure more than 90% of the cases of Lyme disease. Sometimes a second course of treatment is required, but there are some patients who suffer from recurring symptoms long after the treatment.

As the saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Prevention of Lyme disease includes a variety of steps.

- Control ticks in the environment by removing leaves and clearing brush and tall grass around houses and at the edges of gardens.
- Remove plants that attract deer and construct physical barriers to help discourage deer from coming near homes.
- Wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks more easily.
- Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.
- Spray insect repellent containing DEET on clothes and on exposed skin other than the face, or treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) with permethrin, which kills insects on contact.
- Tape area where pants and socks meet to stop ticks from crawling under clothing.
- Wear a hat and long-sleeved shirt.
- Walk in center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush.
- After being outdoors, wash and dry all clothing at high heat.
- Once you're inside, inspect your body carefully. If you do find a tick, remove it with tweezers and avoid crushing its body.

For more information about Lyme disease, visit the CDC web site at www.cdc.gov, click on "CDC A to Z" and then on "Lyme Disease".

Reportable Conditions 2015 York, PA		
Reported Cases	March 2015	Cum.
Animal Bites	12	23
Campylobacter Enteritis	0	3
Chlamydia	52	126
Giardiasis	1	1
Gonorrhea	8	25
Hepatitis B	1	1
Hepatitis C	5	13
HIV Infection	1	3
Influenza Type A	5	45
Influenza Type B	5	5
Influenza, Not Specified	0	1
Lyme Disease	1	1
Meningitis – Bacterial	1	1
Pertussis	1	2
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	5	29
Syphilis – Primary/Secondary	0	1
Tuberculosis – Latent	4	11
Total Case Reports	102	291

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

The word “hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver. Toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis. Hepatitis is also the name of a family of viral infections that affect the liver. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) causes a self-limited disease that does not result in chronic infection or chronic liver disease. HAV infection is primarily transmitted by the fecal-oral route, by either person-to-person contact or through consumption of contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent HAV infection and is recommended for all children starting at age 1 year, certain international travelers and others at risk for HAV infection.

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection caused by Hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV infection can cause acute illness and in approximately 1 out of 10 cases can lead to chronic or lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. HBV is transmitted through contact with infectious blood, semen, or other body fluids from an infected person. Hepatitis B vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent HBV infection and its consequences and is recommended for all infants and others at risk for HBV infection.

Hepatitis C is caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV) that sometimes results in an acute infection, but most often becomes a silent, chronic infection that can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, liver cancer, and death. Chronic HCV infection develops in nearly 9 out of 10 HCV-infected persons, most of whom do not know they are infected since they have no symptoms. HCV is spread by contact with the blood of an infected persons. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C.

Another interesting fact concerning Hepatitis C is that nearly 3 in 4 people with Hepatitis C were born during the year 1945 through 1965 (“Baby Boomers”). To address this ongoing, serious and largely silent epidemic the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that all Baby Boomers get tested for Hepatitis C.

Getting tested can help people learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment. New anti-viral medications are now available that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

For more information about viral hepatitis infections and about May as Hepatitis Awareness Month check CDC’s website at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.

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