Ticks and Lyme Disease

Important health and safety reminders during the active tick season

Green Bay – With spring here and summer just around the corner, many will be spending more time outdoors – potentially in areas where ticks are active. HSHS St. Vincent and St. Mary’s Hospitals, as well as Prevea Health, offer the following tips and reminders to help everyone recognize and treat tick-related incidents.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there are two common types of ticks that spread disease: deer (black-legged) ticks and wood (dog) ticks. Wood ticks have whitish markings on the body, while deer ticks are reddish to dark brown in appearance without white markings. Deer ticks are also usually smaller.

Deer ticks are a known carrier of Lyme disease. Wisconsin had 3,105 estimated cases of Lyme disease in 2018, and the average number of reported cases has more than doubled over the last 10 years. With Lyme disease, illness usually occurs within 3 to 30 days after being exposed to an infected deer tick. Symptoms may include rash, flu-like symptoms (headache, fever, muscle aches and joint pain) and enlarged lymph nodes.

The most common illnesses, other than Lyme disease, are anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis. Anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis are also transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected deer tick. Illness usually occurs within 1 to 3 weeks after being exposed to an infected tick. Symptoms may include fever, chills, muscle pain, severe headache, and fatigue.

If you are experiencing the above symptoms and think you’ve been exposed to an infected tick, call your primary care provider to determine if you should schedule an appointment or seek medical treatment.

How to Reduce Your Risk of Getting a Tick Bite

- Dress appropriately: wear light-colored clothing, long pants and sleeves; tuck in shirts, tuck pants into socks and wear closed-toed shoes.
- Use insect repellents on skin that contain at least 20 percent DEET (Do not use insect repellent on children younger than 2 months old, or on a child’s hands, eyes or mouth).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear, or treat your gear and clothing with permethrin before departure.
- Stay out of tall grass, brush or heavily wooded areas.

How to Properly Remove a Tick

- Use tweezers to grasp the tick (as close to the skin as possible).
- Pull backwards gently but firmly, using an even pressure, do not twist or jerk.
- Do not squeeze, crush, or puncture the body of the tick. This can cause the tick to inject body fluids and increase the risk for infection.
- After removing the tick, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
• Note: If any part of the mouth of the tick remains in the skin, it’s recommended to leave it alone as it will come out on its own. Attempting to remove these parts may result in skin trauma and increase your risk of infection not associated with Lyme disease.

You may have heard about common remedies for removing ticks such as smoldering with a match; however, this is not recommended as it may burn the skin and increase risk of infections. Using nail polish, petroleum jelly, liquid soap or kerosene is also not recommended. Although these products may help to remove the tick, they can cause the tick to inject body fluids into the wound, which may increase the risk of Lyme disease.

To learn more about ticks and tick-borne diseases, please visit: www.cdc.gov/ticks

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**About HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center**

HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center have been delivering quality health care to Green Bay and its surrounding communities since 1888. With HSHS St. Vincent being the largest tertiary care hospital and HSHS St. Mary’s location on Green Bay’s west side, patients from Northeastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan benefit from a comprehensive range of services that include cancer care, women’s services, emergency and trauma care, preventive care across the lifespan, digestive health, orthopedic, cardiac care, neurosciences, rehabilitation and pediatrics. Affiliates of Hospital Sisters Health System, the hospitals primary purpose is to continue Christ’s healing love through the delivery of competent and compassionate health care in an environment sensitive to the needs of all people. Both hospitals are accredited by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

**About Hospital Sisters Health System**

Hospital Sisters Health System’s (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our 15 Local Systems and physician practices in Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O’Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.

**About Prevea Health**

Founded in Green Bay, Wis. in 1996, Prevea Health is a health care organization that provides high-quality, primary and specialty health care in 80+ locations across northern, eastern and western Wisconsin in clinic and hospital settings. It is partnered with six Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) hospitals across Wisconsin to provide patients a system of highly-coordinated care, close to home: HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center in Green Bay; HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital in Sheboygan; HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital in Oconto Falls; HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire; and HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital in Chippewa Falls. For more information, visit www.prevea.com.