

## Vermont had the Second Highest Cases of Lyme Disease in 2011

The numbers are in! In 2011, the CDC reported that Vermont had the second highest incidence of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in the United States, up from fifth place in 2010. *Borrelia burgdorferi* is the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. It is a preventable infectious disease transmitted through a deer tick bite. Contrary to popular belief, fewer than half of patients with Lyme disease recall a deer tick bite. Fewer than half of patients with Lyme disease recall a “bull’s eye” rash, which may appear three to 30 days after the tick bite. The following symptoms may develop up to 30 days after the bite: flu-like symptoms, joint pain or swelling, muscle pain, numbness or tingling, facial palsy.

**Prevention** is the best medicine:

- Remember: ticks are active over 28 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Avoid areas that are wooded or bushy with high grass, and leaf litter.
- Wear long sleeves and pants that are light colored. Tuck pants into socks.
- Conduct tick checks every night: remember your back, back of legs, groin, under arms and head.
- Place clothes in the dryer for 15 minutes to kill ticks.
- Check pets regularly for ticks.
- Create **tick repellent** with Rose Geranium essential oil. In a spray bottle mix:
  - 1 teaspoon of Rose Geranium
  - 1 teaspoon of alcohol
  - 8 ounces of water
- Create a tick-free area in your yard:
  - Create dry non-wooded areas, as ticks thrive in wet wooded areas. Clear tall grass and leaves. Keep wood in dry areas. Prevent deer from entering yard. Use deer-resistant plants or Dial soap.
- Early tick removal reduces the risk of infection:
  - Use tweezers to grasp the mouthpart of the tick close to the skin. Tick twisters or a tick key are more efficient than using tweezers.
  - Do not grasp or squeeze the body of the tick, as this may force the organisms carried by the tick into the person.
  - Pull the tick very firmly and straight out.
  - Do not use Vaseline, alcohol or burn the tick.
  - Watch for symptoms: fatigue, headache, chills, fever, muscle/joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, Erythema Migrans (bull’s eye rash) over the next few weeks.
  - Contact your health care provider if you cannot remove the tick and for antibiotic treatment after a tick bite.
- **Homeopathy for First Aid**
  - Tick Bite
    - Ledum 1M
    - 3 pellets under your tongue 3 times daily, for 3 days.
  - “Bull’s Eye” Rash
    - Apis 30C
    - 3 pellets under your tongue 3 times daily, for 3 days.

- Remember: Homeopathic first aid DOES NOT replace proper treatment of a tick bite. Immediately, call your Lyme literate health care provider.

It is recommended that you call a Lyme literate health care provider if you have been bitten by a tick, find a rash around the tick bite, find a “bull’s eye” rash on your body, or if you experience unexplainable intermittent fevers, fatigue, malaise, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, or facial paralysis. The standard treatment in the medical field for *acute* Lyme disease includes a course of antibiotics, which is effective when treated early.

Lyme disease is epidemic in Vermont. However, enjoy the outdoors this season. Just remember to conduct a full body check for ticks after you brush your teeth each night – it only takes a minute!