

If you coach a sport in Vermont then you need to know about Lyme disease.



Vermont has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the U.S.A. Over 50% of ticks in Vermont are infected with *B. burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Ticks may be infected with other pathogens that can cause illness. Children in Vermont are at most risk for contracting Lyme disease, as infection rates are highest in young people aged 5 to 15.

Things To DO

- ✓ Remind athletes about tick checks
- ✓ Encourage athletes to treat their socks and clothing with permethrin to prevent tick bite
- ✓ Know that ticks are present YEAR ROUND in Vermont, and Lyme disease has been diagnosed in our state all 12 months of the year
- ✓ Learn the signs and symptoms of tickborne diseases so you can recognize when a student-athlete may be ill
- ✓ Recommend your athletes practice tick-bite prevention, including putting exposed clothing in the dryer on high for 10-20 minutes when they get home from a game or practice, and using tick repellants
- ✓ Place pinnies and uniforms in the dryer for 10 - 20 minutes on high to kill ticks
- ✓ Model prevention behavior to your team

Things NOT To Do

- ✗ Send students into tall grass or dense woods to retrieve balls
- ✗ Neglect to educate student athletes about the importance of tick checks and Lyme disease prevention
- ✗ Throw pinnies or sweatshirts on the ground. These should be placed in containers off the ground so they are less accessible to ticks
- ✗ Forget that ticks can also be present in short, mowed grass as well as tall grass, leaf litter, and dense woods
- ✗ Believe Lyme disease always presents with a bulls-eye rash, joint pain or fever. Rather, symptoms of a tickborne illness may include mood swings, memory loss, vision problems, cognitive difficulties and fatigue
- ✗ Sit on the grass instead of on a tarp, blanket or ball

Here is what the Vermont Department of Health recommends to prevent tick bites:

- ✓ Use clothing and gear treated with Permethrin
- ✓ Use repellents that are labeled for ticks
- ✓ Wear light colored clothing so that it is easier to spot ticks
- ✓ Tuck pants into socks, and your shirt into pants
- ✓ Wear hats and place long hair in braids to minimize access for ticks
- ✓ Avoid walking through high grass, bushy areas, sitting on logs, rocks, or against trees
- ✓ Use a blanket or tarp to avoid sitting directly on the ground
- ✓ CONDUCT DAILY TICK CHECKS
- ✓ Tick check your gear and clothing prior to getting into a vehicle or entering your home
- ✓ Place exposed clothing and gear directly into dryer (not washer!) on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks that may be clinging to the fabric
- ✓ Shower as soon as you come inside if you have been in tick habitat

For more information please visit www.VTLyme.org.

Thank you for doing your part to help prevent Lyme and tickborne diseases in Vermont's children!