

If you have an afterschool program in Vermont 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 also 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 children, ages 5 to 15.

Things To DO

- ✓ Remind children and parents about the importance of daily tick-checks
- ✓ Encourage parents to treat their children's socks and clothing with permethrin to prevent tick-bites
- ✓ 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 tick-borne diseases so you can recognize when a child in your program may be ill
- ✓ Practice tick-bite prevention, and use appropriate tick repellants
- ✓ Place any exposed clothing in a dryer for 10 - 20 minutes on high to kill ticks
- ✓ Landscape play areas in ways that can reduce the presence of ticks

Things NOT To Do

- ✗ Send children into tall grass or dense woods to play or retrieve balls
- ✗ Neglect to educate employees about the importance of tick-checks and Lyme disease prevention
- ✗ Throw jackets or sweaters on the ground. These should be placed on hooks, or in containers off the ground, so they are less accessible to ticks
- ✗ Forget that ticks can be present in short, mowed grass or play areas as well as tall grass, leaf litter, and dense woods
- ✗ Believe Lyme disease always presents with a bull-eye rash, joint pain or fever. Rather, symptoms of a pediatric tick-borne illness can include mood swings, vision problems, cognitive difficulties, headaches, sudden anxiety (or changes in behavior), and fatigue
- ✗ Sit directly on the grass instead of a tarp or blanket

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

- ✓ Wear clothing 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 and bushy areas and sitting on logs or 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, and access to free prevention education materials for children, please visit www.VTLyme.org. Thank you for doing your part to help prevent Lyme and tick-borne diseases in Vermont's children!