TICK BITE

Stemming the rising tide of human biting ticks…

Ticks - Basics

- Second to mosquitoes as vectors of human disease. Ticks can carry and transmit many pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, protozoa, spirochetes, rickettsiae, nematodes, and toxins. Examples of tick borne diseases: Lyme disease, babesiosis, tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Q-fever, red meat allergy, etc.
- Ticks find their hosts by detecting breath and body odors, or by sensing body heat, moisture, or vibration

Prevention

- Avoid grassy areas with shrubs which attract ticks.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks, and closed-toe shoes. Wear white or light-colored clothing so that attached ticks can be easily noticed.
- Inspect your clothing and skin after being outdoors. Remove ticks as soon as they are detected.

Ixodes scapularis tick, vector for Lyme disease

Proper tick removal strategy

- Grab the tick as close to the skin as possible with very fine forceps, or fine-tipped tweezers, and pull it with gentle, steady, upward traction. Don't squeeze, twist, or jerk the tick. Avoid compressing the tick's feeding chamber as it can release allergen into the vasculature.
- After removing the tick, clean the bite area with soap and water, or disinfect it thoroughly with alcohol or another skin antiseptic solution.
- Do not burn the tick with a match, or use gasoline, petroleum, and other organic solvents to suffocate it.
- Watch for symptoms, such as red expanding skin rash, fatigue, fever, chills, headache, neck stiffness, flue-like symptoms, muscle or joint pain, facial muscle weakness or paralysis.

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