



# Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners

## Health and Safety

Updated: September 11, 2015

### *Lyme Disease*

**Issue:** Infection due to *Borrelia burgdorferi* from tick bite.

#### **Background to the Issue:**

- In 2015 it is now known that blacklegged ticks (sometimes called deer ticks) are established in the southern portion of Manitoba. Birds anywhere in Manitoba may deposit these ticks but there is greatest risk in the southeast, including Whiteshell Park.
- Lyme disease is infection by a spiral-shaped bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* transmitted through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (sometimes called deer ticks) to humans and dogs.
- Blacklegged ticks can be found between April and November.
- These ticks are smaller than the common wood tick that does not transmit Lyme disease.
- The tick is about the size of the lead in a pencil and has a small circular reddish patch behind the head.

#### **Cautionary Notes:**

- Symptoms can start between 2 days and 2 month after the tick bite.
- There may be a ring-like rash ("bulls-eye" lookalike), that then fades.
- Symptoms can include headache, stiff neck, fever, muscle aches or fatigue. It may be difficult to diagnose because symptoms are similar to other diseases.
- The disease can be treated with antibiotics and is most successful if treated in the early stages of infection.

#### **What is current Policy or Advice for this issue?**

- Reduce contact with blacklegged (deer) ticks by avoiding tick-invested areas whenever possible.
- Wear light-coloured clothing to make it easier to see ticks on you.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts where ticks are commonly found.
- Inspect yourself, children and pets for ticks and remove them as soon as possible;
- Keep grass well mowed to help reduce habitat suitable for ticks.
- Reduce risk by removing tick early. Carefully remove it with tweezers. Grasp the tick close to the skin and pull slowly upward with steady pressure. Avoid twisting or crushing the tick. Clean the skin around the bite with soap and water or a disinfectant.
- Mark date and location of the bite on your calendar

### ***Action Taken by MACO:***

- Cottagers are advised through newsletters and seminars to be cognizant of the risk of contracting Lyme Disease from the bites of deer ticks.

### ***MACO's Recommendations for the Future:***

- Seek information about Lyme disease by visiting the Manitoba Health and Healthy Living website at [www.gov.mb.ca/health/lyme/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/lyme/index.html).  
If one wishes to obtain government press releases on the latest incidence of Lyme Disease – go to “**Google**” and search for **Manitoba Government news Lyme disease**.
- Go to your family doctor immediately if you develop a “bull’s-eye” rash from a tick bite and insist that they consider treating you prophylactically for Lyme disease.
- Be aware that dogs (your pets) can become infected by the bites of this tick.
- There are vaccines available for dogs, and if your pet spends a lot of time outdoors in prime tick country, it is recommended that they be vaccinated.
- If a person develops illness such as shifting joint pain after a period of time following a tick bite, insist that your physician do a blood test for Lyme Disease.

### ***Position of MACO***

- If you find ticks on yourself or your pets, you should collect them in a small plastic pill bottle and take or send them to **Terry Galloway, Department of Entomology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2**.
- Mark the envelope – Attention: Tick Survey, and include a short history of where and when these ticks were found.