

Dear Parents and Guardians,

When spring arrives and as the weather warms up, ticks are in full force. They live in long grass, brushy wooded areas, and feed on animals and birds. Ticks cannot fly or jump, but crawl onto their hosts. Tick born diseases in Wisconsin are increasing. The black legged (or deer tick) can transmit, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, lyme and powassan disease.

Prevention:

- Wear light colored clothing to better see the ticks for removal.
- Check yourself and family twice daily or more often if you are in grassy areas.
- Use recommended insect repellent and follow label instructions.
- Mow lawns frequently, keep yard furniture and play areas away from long grass.
- Consult a professional pesticide company for large tick areas; they can spray a pesticide that kills ticks.

Proper removal of the tick:

- **DO NOT** squeeze the belly or head when removing a tick or do not twist. Grasp the tweezers at the embedded mouthpart in the skin, pull out and upward. (Squeezing the body or head, compresses the guts and salivary glands which releases the toxic bacteria into the bloodstream of the person.) After removing the tick, thoroughly wash the bite site with soap and water or rubbing alcohol and apply over-the-counter antibiotic ointment, cover with a band-aid, and wash your hands.
- See your doctor if you are unable to remove the tick completely.

Recognizing symptoms:

- **Each individual** may have **varying** symptoms; no rash, a rash of any shape, or a bulls eye rash **anywhere** on your body, **anytime**. Migraines, fever, chills, sweats, headaches, fatigue, joint pain, swelling, muscle aches, swollen lymph glands, nausea, vomiting, or loss of appetite, confusion, red eyes, stiff neck, chest pain, palpitations, or shortness of breath.
- **See** your doctor if you **develop any** of these flu-like symptoms **anytime** that do not resolve in 1 or 2 days, or gradually increase in intensity, even if you are not **aware** of a tick bite. You cannot feel a tick bite.
- Ticks can carry a specific bacteria that can cause dual infections with life threatening complications.
- **Treatment is based on clinical symptoms**, should be started immediately, never be delayed pending laboratory test results or withheld on the basis of an initial negative result.

Prevention, removal, recognizing symptoms and early treatment is important for everyone to have a healthy and safe summer. Please phone the Gilmanton School nurse's office at 715-946-3158, ext. 120 if you have further questions or concerns and I will be happy to get back to you. (**Dryer sheets** placed under a hat, inside shirt sleeves and inside socks around ankles can be helpful to prevent ticks from crawling onto clothing/skin.)

Sincerely, Elaine Rud, RN, School Nurse