



## AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

### LYME DISEASE UPDATE

Dear IC Parents and Families,

Spring is here! Please take a few minutes to read the following information provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, it is important for your children's health!

- Massachusetts has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest incidence of Lyme disease in the country. Your children are at risk in particular!
- Ticks carry Lyme disease, ticks can be found in grassy areas and even in your own backyard. Deer and rodents carry infected ticks.
- When you are outdoors, it is important to use protection against tick bites. Wear a repellent containing **DEET** apply to the skin directly.
- Tuck pants into socks when outside, wear long sleeves if possible, remove, and wash all clothing immediately after outdoor activity in grassy areas.
- Shower or bathe immediately after returning home and check your skin for ticks. If you have a tick attached to your skin it should be removed as soon as possible using a fine-point tweezers. The tick should not be squeezed or twisted, but grasped close to the skin and pulled straight out with steady pressure.
- Watch for symptoms of Lyme disease: monitor yourself for the appearance of rash, fever or other unusual symptoms and immediately seek the advice of a health care provider should any symptoms occur.

#### **Some notes on protection:**

##### **What is a tick repellent?**

A tick repellent is a substance put on skin, clothing, or other surfaces which discourages ticks from crawling on that surface.

##### **Why should I use a tick repellent?**

Ticks can spread germs that cause disease. Using a tick repellent can reduce your chances of being bitten by a tick and therefore reduce the risk that you will get one of these diseases.

### **When should I use a tick repellent?**

Use these products when you are outside and exposed to ticks. Ticks are usually found on plants near the ground in brushy, wooded or grassy places. They cannot fly. They can be active year round, depending on the temperature, but are most often a problem between April and October. Depending on where you live, you could get bitten by a tick in your own yard.

### **What kind of repellent should I use?**

Different products work against different bugs. It is important to look at the ðactive ingredientö on the product label. Products with **DEET** (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or **permethrin** are recommended for protection against ticks. Some repellents, such as picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, have been found to provide protection against mosquitoes but have not been shown to work against ticks.

**DEET** is the active ingredient found in most repellent products. It can be used directly on exposed skin or on clothing. If you use it on your clothes, be aware that DEET can damage some synthetic fabrics such as acetate, rayon or spandex. There are over 200 products containing DEET registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ranging in concentration from 5% to 100% DEET. **Read the product label to determine the percentage of DEET included and how often it should be reapplied.** DEET products should not be used on infants under 2 months of age. Children older than two months should use concentrations of 30% or less. There is limited information available on how well and how long different concentrations of DEET work against ticks.

**Permethrin** products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin. Apply the permethrin to your clothes before you put them on and follow the product's instructions.

Enjoy the season- protect yourselves and your children!

**Hannah Crochetiere RN, BSN**  
**School Nurse**

For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/Prevention>

<http://maddph>

<http://www.ilads.org/>

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/lyme.pdf>

<http://www.aldf.com/>

<http://deetonline.org>