



# ASPIRE<sup>®</sup>

## DERMATOLOGY

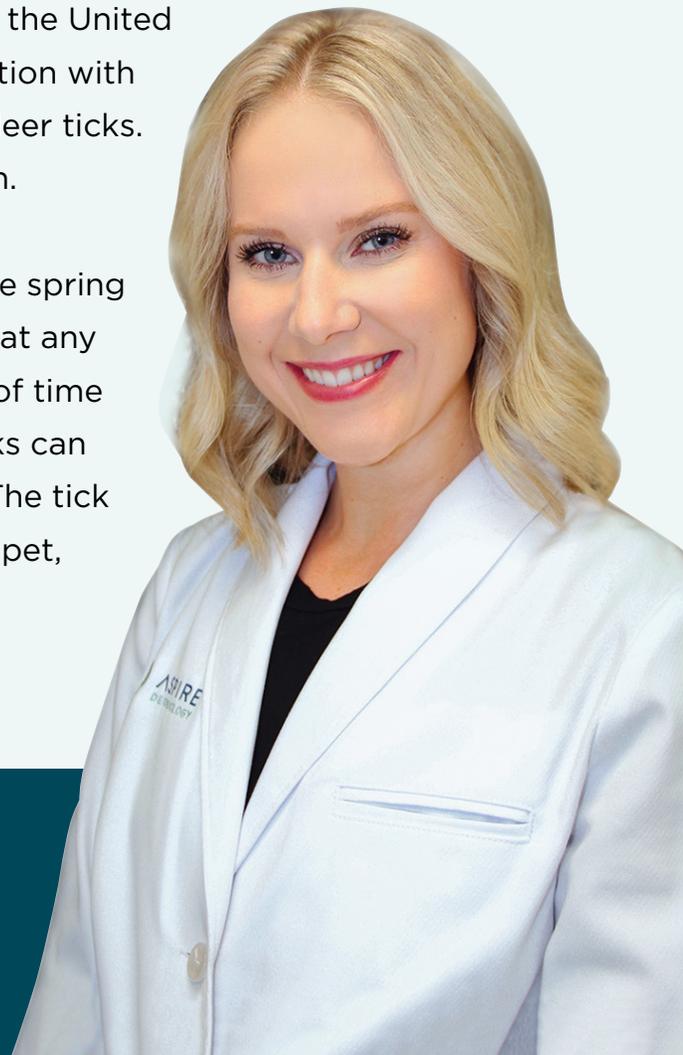
Newsletter: June, 2020

### Ticks Exposure & Lyme Disease

As the weather is starting to change many of us are spending more time outside welcoming the transition. Warmer weather brings the joys of flowers, gardening, hiking, and grilling. Living in New England we know that being outdoors more can also cause exposure to ticks, which can carry the risk of Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in the United States and Europe. Lyme disease is caused by an infection with the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is carried by deer ticks. The bacteria are transmitted when a tick bites a person.

Infection with *B. burgdorferi* usually occurring in the late spring and summer months, however, transmission can occur at any time throughout the year. Individuals who spend a lot of time outdoors are at the greatest risk for Lyme disease. Ticks can also attach to pets and can be carried into the home. The tick can infect the pet, or, if the tick does not attach to the pet, it can become attached to a human and potentially transmit the infection.



April Brosnan  
FNP-C



Symptoms of Lyme disease can vary widely and may include flu-like symptoms, arthritis, heart symptoms, neurologic symptoms, and a red rash (erythema migrans) that can sometimes look like a bulls-eye at the site of the tick bite. Infection causes few or no symptoms in a small percentage of people. Symptoms are caused by the body's immune response to the bacteria and the inflammation that results; inflammation may continue after treatment.

Diagnosis of Lyme disease is based on history of possible exposure to ticks, signs and symptoms, and blood tests. Antibiotics are the primary treatment for Lyme disease, and almost all patients recover after antibiotic treatment. The recommended treatment for Lyme disease varies depending upon the stage of disease and the types of symptoms. The rate of recovery may also vary depending upon the specific symptoms and recovery may take weeks to months after finishing antibiotic treatment.



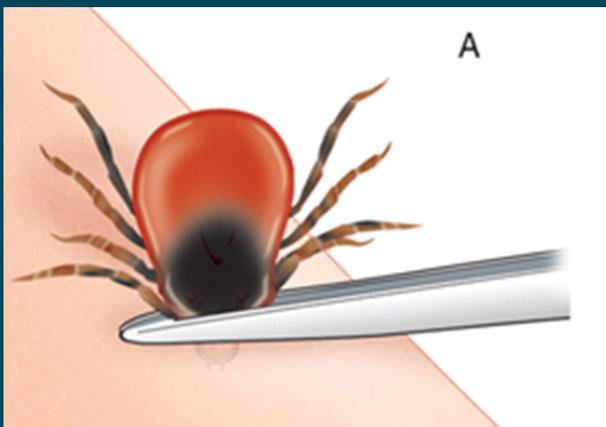
***Precautions can be taken to prevent ticks from attaching to your skin if spending time in known tick infested areas.***

- **Wear protective clothing** – Long sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks.
- **Shower** – Showering within two hours of potential exposure can reduce the chance of being infected with Lyme disease by washing away ticks before they have a chance to bite and attach firmly.
- **Tick repellent or tick killing products** – Look for insect repellents containing DEET, IR3535, or Picaridin. Permethrin is a pesticide that kills ticks and mites that can be applied to clothes, tents, and bed netting.
- **Inspect clothing and skin** – Thoroughly inspect skin especially where ticks most often bite, including the armpits, groin, and backs of knees, belt line and the scalp. Removing ticks within 36 hours makes transmission of the bacteria that causes Lyme less likely.
- **Place clothing in a dryer** – Place clothes in a dryer on high heat for about 5 minutes after outdoor activities to reduce risk of being exposed to ticks carried in on clothing.

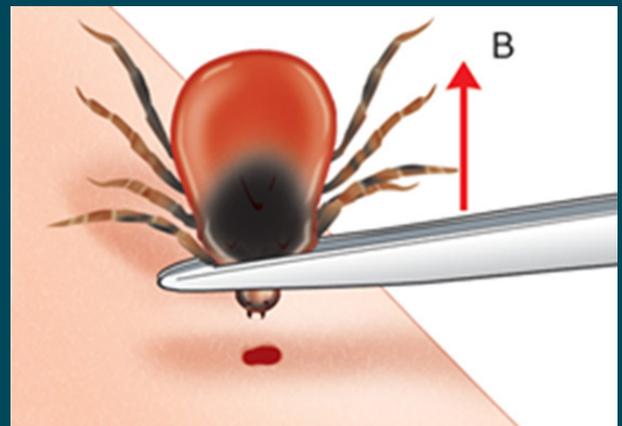
## *If you do find a tick attached to your skin, proper technique for removal is important and includes the following steps:*

- Use tweezers or small forceps to grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible. If tweezers are not available, use paper or cloth to protect the fingers during removal.
- Pull straight up using firm, steady pressure. Do not jerk or twist.
- Do not squeeze, crush, or puncture the body of the tick.
- Cleanse the skin thoroughly after removing using soap and water.
- If sections of mouthparts remain in the skin, they should be left alone as the body will usually force them out.
- After removal, observe the area for development of a red, possible bulls-eye rash for up to 30 days. Please note that mild redness and irritation may occur from the bite itself.
- Since the tick usually needs to be attached for 2-3 days before transmission of Lyme disease occurs, removal of the tick within this time frame often prevents infection.

### ➤ PROPER TICK REMOVAL ◀



Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.



Pull upward with steady, even pressure. DO NOT twist or jerk the tick.

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