

# Lyme Disease Found Throughout Md.

BALTIMORE, Md. — A recent collaborative study involving seven state and federal agencies shows the bacterium that causes Lyme disease has been found throughout the state of Maryland, with the exception of the four westernmost counties and Caroline County on the Eastern Shore.

The study, entitled the "1989 Maryland Deer Tick Survey," involved the efforts of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the United States Army Environmental Hygiene Activity-North, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the University of Maryland. Funding for the study was provided by all 23 Maryland counties as they all participated in the study.

Lyme disease is transmitted by the deer tick — a very small arthropod that is hard to detect, unlike the larger and more commonly recognized wood tick. An immature deer tick is so small, it is not much larger than the period at the end of this sentence. Fully engorged (fed) females may be larger than a kernel of corn.

In November, 1989 the collaborative study began with the collection of deer ticks to determine their distribution throughout the state. The ticks were collected from deer brought into a designated DNR checking station in each county during the state's deer hunting season. They were than

analyzed for the bacterium causing Lyme disease.

Deer ticks were found in each county except Garrett and Washington. They were heavily abundant in the counties surrounding the Chesapeake Bay, moderately abundant in central Maryland, and least abundant in the Western counties.

Lyme disease bacterium was isolated from deer ticks in every county except Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Caroline.

"This shouldn't give Marylanders living in those areas the impression that Lyme disease can't be contracted in those counties," said Adele Wilzack, secretary of DHMH. "Although the risk in the western part of the state may be less, residents in those areas should take efforts to avoid tick bites."

"The 1989 study will give us crucial baseline information to evaluate future tick surveys and to monitor the spread of the deer tick in Maryland," said Craig S. Oliver, Ph.D., director, Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, who has been involved in the tick survey since its inception.

"This project is an excellent example of many state, county, and federal agencies working together to assess the potential health risks of Lyme disease to people in Maryland. I am pleased with the efforts of all people involved in the cooperative project," said Wayne A. Cawley Jr., Maryland secretary of agriculture.

The deer tick distribution found

in the study corresponds to the pattern of reported human cases of Lyme disease in Maryland. The DHMH recorded 138 cases of Lyme disease in Maryland in 1989. Eighteen cases were reported in Baltimore County, followed by Montgomery County with 16, Anne Arundel with 14, and Charles with 13. Kent and Queen Anne's Counties each reported 11 cases; Calvert and Prince George's Counties each reported 8 cases. Seven cases were reported in Cecil County, 6 in Baltimore City, and 4 in Harford County. Dorchester, Frederick, Howard, and Saint Mary's Counties each reported 3 cases while Caroline, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties each reported 2 cases. One case each was reported in Carroll and Washington Counties.

So far, in 1990, about 10 cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Maryland.

Personal protective measures remain the best means of reducing the risk of Lyme disease. These measures include:

- Use a tick repellent containing permethrin on clothing as directed on the label.
  - Wear light-colored clothing to make detection of ticks easier.
  - Tuck pant legs into socks or tape pant legs to top of boots to prevent ticks from getting under clothing.
  - Make frequent "tick checks" and remove ticks promptly.
- Carefully remove attached ticks with fine tweezers, grasping the tick as close to the skin as possible

and pulling firmly. Disinfect the bite with antiseptic and save the tick for future reference. Note the date of the bite on a calendar in case symptoms develop.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease may include a reddish expanding rash at the site of the tick bite and/or flu-like symptoms such as headache, fever, chills, muscle, or joint aches. Anyone developing symptoms following a tick bite should consult a physician promptly.

Also, perform frequent tick checks on your pets, because dogs and other animals can contract Lyme disease. They cannot, how-

ever, pass the disease on to humans.

Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. In most cases, early treatment will prevent the development of significant cardiac, neurologic, and arthritic problems.

Most tick bites occur from April to October when immature stages of the deer tick are active. Deer ticks are usually found in woods and brushy areas.

For more information on Lyme disease, call your physician, veterinarian, county extension agent, or local or state public health officials.

## 4-H Natural Resources Camp Set

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Earth Day 1990 is over, but Maryland youngsters age 12 through 18 will have an opportunity to continue their environmental education at the 4-H natural resources summer camp scheduled July 2 through 6.

The camp, sponsored by the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service (MCES), will be held at the Rocks 4-H Camp north of Bel Air in Harford County.

"Our goal is to make learning about the environment fun," said Bob Tjaden, a regional natural resources specialist with MCES. "The camp agenda is based on the planning committee's philosophy of 'tell me, I'll forget; show me, I may remember; but involve me, and I'll understand.'"

Involvement for the campers

will include tubing down Deer Creek, exploring wildlife habitats, measuring and determining the age of trees, conducting water quality tests, and hiking to King and Queen Street, an historic landmark.

The youngsters also will investigate a sensitive water quality issue during a role playing game called "Hometown USA." Afterward, they will get a chance to see how a panel of farmers, developers, elected officials, and agency representatives deal with the same issue.

Three field trips, including visits to a wildlife farm, the Conowingo Dam, and a wastewater treatment facility will round out their camping experience.

Contact the 4-H agent at your local cooperative extension service office for more information.

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