Wood Tick Bites

Ticks are insects that attach themselves to the skin. Most tick bites are harmless, but sometimes ticks carry diseases that can make a person quite ill. The chance of getting ill depends on:

- The kind of tick that bites you.
- Time of year.
- How long the tick is attached.
- Geographic location.

Wood Ticks
(Larger Than Actual Size)

Wood ticks are also called dog ticks. They are generally black. They can have white markings. They live in shrubs and grassy areas. They are larger than deer ticks. Wood ticks are about the size of a watermelon seed. They have a hard body.

The most common places for ticks to attach themselves are the scalp, neck, armpits, waist, and groin. Wood tics may stay attached for up to 2 weeks.

TICKS MUST BE REMOVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO HELP PREVENT DISEASES CAUSED BY TICK BITES.

TO REMOVE A TICK:

1. If available, put on latex gloves before trying to remove a tick.
2. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, with curved forceps, fine tweezers or a special tick removal tool.
3. Pull gently with steady pressure until the tick lets go. Do not twist the tick or jerk it suddenly. This may break off the tick's head or mouth parts.
4. Do not crush the tick's body. This could force disease-carrying fluids from the tick into your body.
5. After the tick is removed, wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water or other disinfectant.
6. Apply a small amount of antiseptic cream or ointment to the bite site.
7. Wash and disinfect any instruments that were used.
8. Save the tick in a jar or plastic bag for later identification. Preserve the tick with a bit of alcohol or put it in the freezer.
9. Do not apply a hot match, petroleum jelly, or fingernail polish to the tick. This does not work and may increase the chances of disease from the tick bite.

YOU MAY NEED TO SEE YOUR CAREGIVER FOR A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.

If you need a tetanus shot, and you decide not to get one, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious.
If you get a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red and warm to the touch at the shot site. This is common and not a problem.

TO PREVENT TICK BITES WHEN IN A TICK INFESTED AREA:

- Wear protective clothing. Long sleeves and pants are best.
- Wear white clothes to see ticks more easily
- Tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- If walking on trail, stay in the middle of the trail to avoid brushing against bushes.
- Put insect repellent on all exposed skin and along boot tops, pant legs and sleeve cuffs
- Check clothing, hair and skin repeatedly and before coming inside.

- Brush off any ticks that are not attached.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You cannot remove a tick or part of the tick that is left in the skin.
- Unexplained fever.
- Redness and swelling in the area of the tick bite.
- Tender, swollen lymph glands.
- Diarrhea.
- Weight loss.
- Cough.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle, joint or bone pain.
- Belly pain.
- Headache.
- Rash.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You are having trouble walking or moving your legs.
- Numbness in the legs.
- Shortness of breath.
- Confusion.
- Repeated vomiting.

Document Released: 04/07/2004 Document Re-Released: 11/30/2009
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.