

Tick Time: Prevention, Treatment, and Resources

Although tick exposure can occur at any time in Wisconsin, now is the time when their activity (and likely that of our patients and ourselves) is most prevalent. Tick activity is highest in Wisconsin from May through November, so it is good to familiarize yourself (and patients) of the risk, the resources available to help *prevent* tick exposure/bites, and when treatment may be indicated.

The information is too detailed and specific to best summarize in a newsletter article such as this. Instead, probably the two best resources to bookmark are links related to this topic on the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)' (DHHS) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's](#) (CDC) websites. Both websites contain an extensive amount of information.

The DHHS website tends to have information and resources that are more patient-centered, with topics including:

- Personal protection
- Tick control
- Additional resources, including information on tick-borne disease signs/symptoms, Lyme disease education, tick identification, and tick removal procedures

They even provide a link to a [rap video](#) from Fairfax County Health Department (Virginia) on ways to prevent tick bites. This may be the first time that a rap video has ever been referenced in a *PharmAid* newsletter, but it's actually entertaining! Take a look, share with your staff sitting next to you (to get a laugh), and consider even showing it to a patient or two.

The CDC's website has resources appropriate for both patients and providers. They provide more detailed information about Lyme disease itself, signs/symptoms of untreated disease, how the disease spreads, and disease [surveillance data](#). Important for you as a *provider*, the website contains information about the *clinical care of Lyme disease, testing, and diagnosis*. They include clinical care treatment guidelines for:

- [Erythema migrans rash](#)
- [Lyme arthritis](#)
- [Lyme carditis](#)
- [Neurological Lyme disease](#)

These treatment guidelines were published based on the [Clinical Practice Guidelines by the Infectious Diseases Society of America, American Academy of Neurology, and American College of Rheumatology: 2020 Guidelines for the Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Lyme Disease](#).

The DHHS website also mentions a free app, [The Tick App](#), from their partners at the Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Disease. It was developed by a team from Columbia University, Michigan State University, the University of Illinois, and the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**. Although this app may not be the most applicable to all of your patients,

it may be something to consider for patients who are particularly interested in this topic, want to know how to identify/remove ticks, and are wanting to even track tick sightings/activity.

Although preventing tick bites is always the best goal, inevitably bites occur. The CDC has a helpful page discussing "[What to Do After a Tick Bite](#)," as well as education on how a person can best try to remove an attached tick on their own. One word of caution they provide is *not* use petroleum jelly, heat, nail polish, or other substances to try and encourage the tick to detach itself from one's skin. Doing so may instead irritate the tick, force infected fluids (the disease vector) from the tick into the skin. If a bite has occurred, patients can also utilize the [Tick Bite Bot](#) to learn how to remove a tick as well as to help decide if seeking medical care is necessary.

Ticks can be found throughout Wisconsin, not just "up north" or out in the woods. Helping your patients be vigilant, and being prepared on how to treat them if a tick bite occurs, will make it easier for you when it occurs.