



HUNTERS BEWARE

By: Kandice Dickover
Founder, Howard County Lyme Awareness

As you go in search of the prize buck this season, watch that the bulls-eye doesn't end up on you! Not that the deer are out to get you, but the small poppy seed sized ticks, found in great numbers on deer, birds, and small rodents, are also out hunting for warm bodies like you.

If you are an avid hunter, you might just be used to the little buggers and be tempted to pay no further attention- but there are thousands of hunters, hikers, geocachers, and even gardeners, who have given up doing what they love because the disease that ticks carry have debilitating effects and have prevented them from enjoying the great outdoors.

The Deer tick gets a lot of press, but really there are several types of ticks, like Lone-Star tick, and American Dog tick on the East Coast that carry Lyme and other serious tick-borne illnesses. Hunters should remember that hunting and dressing deer may bring them into close contact with infected ticks. While out in the woods, everyone, especially hunters, should be aware of this threat and take precautions to prevent tick attachment.

Permethrin is the new secret weapon against ticks, used for years by the US military to treat their uniforms. A synthetic insecticide rather than a true repellent, permethrin works by killing ticks on contact with the clothes and is therefore much more effective than other repellents.

Tips for Hunters:

- Outer clothing, socks and boots should be sprayed with a permethrin-based repellent according to label directions before hunting and allowed to thoroughly air dry. Once dry, the permethrin is odorless and lasts on clothing through approximately six washings. (Tick repellent with permethrin can be found at most outdoors stores.)
- Pants should be tucked into socks or boots and shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of clothing. These ticks are difficult to spot on camouflage clothing. All clothing should be carefully inspected for small, dark crawling ticks before entering vehicles and going indoors. Once indoors, thoroughly check for small, attached ticks.

- Spray the cloths tarps that you plan to wrap the deer carcass in with permetherin and this will kill remaining ticks and prevent them from getting in your vehicle and home.
- Take all outerwear off prior to entering your home and place in a garbage bag and spray liberally with permetherin and tie up for at least two hours to kill remaining ticks.
- If you find a tick, pull them off quickly and safely by using a tweezers to grasp the head and gently pull the tick out from the direction it went in. Do not apply soap, petroleum jelly, a hot match, kerosene, alcohol or any other irritant to the tick because it can force the tick's fluids and germs into the bite wound.

If you have been bitten, remove the tick properly, save it in a plastic baggie, and see your doctor immediately. Take some simple precautions and protect yourself from becoming the hunted this season!