

TO YOUR HEALTH



Volume 13, Number 7

July 2008

TICK PATROL

by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

Lyme, Connecticut has the distinction of being the first place to identify the famous tick disease over thirty years ago. Caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi*, a bacterium carried by deer ticks, Lyme disease is well-known in New England where it is most prevalent: as many as 50% of deer ticks are infected. Although our knowledge about Lyme disease has grown and evolved over this time, many myths about its spread and treatment still persist.

Contrary to popular belief, 80 to 90% of all cases of Lyme disease have an expanding, red rash at the site of the tick bite. If treatment begins within the first few weeks after the initial infection, it almost always results in a full cure. Not only does a tick need to be attached to the skin to transmit disease, it must be attached for 36 to 48 hours *and* only 50% of deer ticks carry Lyme disease. This means there is no need to panic if you see a tick crawling on your body!

Since the symptoms of Lyme disease can be subtle, mild signs need prompt attention in New England. In addition, deer ticks are smaller than dog or Lone star ticks that do not carry Lyme disease. Often people are unaware that a tick has attached to areas of the body that are not easy to see: behind the knee, groin, navel, armpit, ears or nape of the neck. The expanding red rash, called erythema migrans, appears from 3 to 30 days after disease transmission and often grows to 5 - 6 inches and lasts for 3 to 5 weeks. The rash rarely is itchy or painful.

Other symptoms, often brief and mild, can occur: joint pains, headache, chills, fever

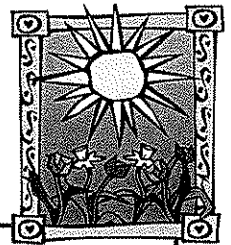
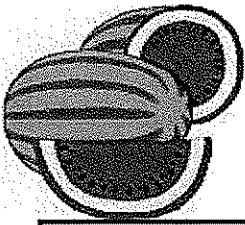
and fatigue. If untreated, Lyme disease becomes a multi-system, inflammatory disease that can spread to the joints, nervous system, and to a lesser extent, other organ systems.

Usually the diagnosis is based on symptoms rather than on blood tests that are not reliable in the first month after the infection. If early symptoms are undetected, more severe symptoms may develop weeks, months or even years after being infected. When Lyme is suspected after time has lapsed, the CDC recommends blood tests even though they are not completely reliable.

Treatment, when initiated within the first few weeks of the initial infection, is very effective and consists of a two-week course of antibiotics. Recently, a single dose of antibiotics has been recommended when the tick can definitely be identified, has been attached to the skin for 36 hours or more, and has been removed no more than 72 hours previously. Treatment of late-Lyme is more complicated and extended. Prevention is the best strategy:

- Learn to recognize deer ticks
- Wear enclosed shoes and light-colored clothing outdoors
- Scan clothes and any exposed skin frequently while outdoors
- Stay on cleared, well-traveled trails
- Use insect repellent on clothes
- Avoid sitting on the ground or on stone walls
- Do a final, full-body tick-check at the end of each day
- Come to the Clinic if you suspect a tick bite

American Lyme Disease Foundation, Inc.,
2006; www.aldf.com

**SUMMERTIME**

by Margaret Ryding

Summer arrived this year with unseasonably hot weather. In Chinese medicine this is the time of the Fire Element which governs the heart, small intestine, and pericardium. Summer is the time to strengthen these organs and feed your fire for the whole year. Winter comes all too soon, but while summer is here, play, sing, ride your bike, swim, take a picnic lunch out to the country, find what makes you happy and spend time doing that. The emotion related to the Fire Element is joy.

Salads, sprouts, cucumbers, apples, watermelon, lemons, and limes are excellent cooling foods to nourish us and keep us cool in the summer heat. Avoid iced drinks, which are hard on the stomach, but teas such as chrysanthemum, mint and chamomile will cool and soothe.

The summer solstice just took place and with it the longest day of the year and the sun's greatest power. This yang time of year can give us great energy. Use it to love those near you, play, have fun, and enjoy your life. Summer is a gift.

WELCOME, DR. GREGORIAN

The Clinic is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ayleen Gregorian as our new podiatrist. Her CWV Clinic office hours are 1:15-4:15pm on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month for Independent and Llewysac Residents.

The Lover of Earth Cannot Help Herself

*In summer,
Though the fields
Of wild mustard,
Then goldenrod,
I walk, brushing
The wicks
Of their bodies
And the bright hair
Of their heads-
And in fact
I lie down
That the little weightless pieces of gold
May float over of,
Shining in the air,
Falling in my hair,
Touching my face-
Ah, sweet-smelling,
Glossy and
Colorful world,
I say,
Even as I begin
To feel
My left eye then the right eye
Begin to burn
And twitch
And grow very large-
Even as I begin
To weep,
To sneeze
In this irrepressible
Seizure
Of summerlove.*

Mary Oliver