

Hunters: Be wary of deer ticks

WITH THE opening of the archery deer season slated for Sunday, Michigan hunters can rest assured there is no epidemic of Lyme disease in Michigan.

Lyme disease is an illness caused by a spirochete bacterium (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) which is transmitted to people and animals through the bite of the deer tick.

Although numerous cases have been reported in Michigan since 1985, state officials are not pushing the panic button as the annual archery and firearms (Nov. 13-30) deer seasons approach.

Awareness of the disease and a few precautionary measures can minimize the potential for contracting Lyme disease. "Lyme disease is a problem in Michigan, but it's not seen at the high level it is seen in some other states like Minnesota, Wisconsin and some of the East Coast states," said Joel Blostein, epidemiologist with the Oakland County Health Department. "In Michigan, it's difficult to say what the magnitude of the problem is because in the past it has not been a reportable disease. The State Health Department estimates there have been 85 cases identified (in Michigan) since 1985. The Upper Peninsula seems to have more of a problem than the Lower Peninsula."

THE KNOWN carrier of the spirochete bacterium, the deer tick (*Ixodes dammini*), is rarely found in Michigan, according to Blostein. Through field and hunter surveys conducted by the Michigan Department of Health in 1988, the deer tick was found only in Clinton County in the Lower Peninsula and five coun-



outdoors
Bill Parker

ties in the western Upper Peninsula; Gogebic, Iron, Dickinson, Menominee and Schoolcraft.

Obviously, deer hunters run a higher risk of coming into contact with the deer tick than non-hunters. Although all hunters should be on the alert for tick bites, hunters venturing into the above areas of the state should be sure to take precautionary measures.

Lyme disease is transmitted to people when the deer tick attaches itself to a human host.

"Evidence seems to indicate that the bacteria is transmitted not simply through a simple bite, but through prolonged attachment," explained Blostein. "It's difficult to say what amount of time is needed (to transmit the bacteria from the tick to the host), but it's probably several hours. That's encouraging in it's own way."

What's encouraging is that if a hunter is bitten, but finds the tick quickly, it can be removed before it has time to transmit the infectious bacteria.

DEER TICKS are about half the size of the common dog tick and a biting deer tick usually doesn't hurt enough to draw attention to itself. To find one, you'll have to check yourself thoroughly.

"Ticks tend to stay close to the ground on small vegetation when not

attached to a host," Blostein explained. "A good place to start looking for one (on your body) is around the feet, ankles and lower legs."

Successful hunters should also check their hands and arms, or any part of the body that comes in contact with the hide of the deer.

Although there are many myths about different ways to remove a tick — gasoline, vaseline, butter, a hot match head — the only sure way to remove one is to pull it out. Tweezers or small forceps usually work best.

The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it as close to the skin as possible and slowly, but firmly, pull it straight out. Be careful not to twist or jerk the tick as the mouth parts — shaped like tiny barbs — may remain imbedded in the skin which could lead to infection. After the tick is removed, wash hands and the affected area and apply an antiseptic to the bite.

LYME DISEASE was first identified in 1975 after a group of children in Lyme, Conn., were stricken with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis — a long-term symptom of the disease. Since then, cases have been reported in 43 states including Michigan.

Reported cases in Michigan are considerably lower than in some states, considering that 90 percent of all reported cases have occurred in

just eight states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Minnesota and California.

The first case reported in Michigan was in 1985. From 1985-87, eight cases were reported in Michigan, all from the Western Upper Peninsula. Overall, 39 cases have been identified in Michigan since 1985 including 16 in the Upper Peninsula, two in Oakland County, three in Livingston County and one in Washtenaw County.

LYME DISEASE can cause serious problems when not detected in the early stage including various degrees of heart block, nervous system abnormalities and arthritis. Antibiotic treatment however, can minimize complications.

If contracted, Lyme disease usually progresses through three stages. Early symptoms, which occur three to 32 days after being bitten, include headache, nausea, fever, fatigue and aching joints and muscles. In about 70-percent of the cases, a red rash, circular rash also appears. The rash may appear at the bite site, but is not restricted to that area and may appear in more than one place. Frequently, the rash appears on the thigh, groin or armpit areas.

The second stage of the disease may set in weeks to months after the initial symptoms and include heart palpitations, paralysis of facial muscles on one of both sides of the face (Bell's palsy), severe head, joint and muscle aches.

Arthritis is the most common symptom in the third stage of the disease, which may occur from a month to several years after the original symptoms appear.

THE BEST way to avoid the disease is to avoid exposure to ticks. Insect repellent containing DEET will keep ticks off the body. Deer hunters who don't want to enter the woods smelling like a can of insect spray can take other precautions such as tucking pantlegs into socks or boots and wearing long-sleeved shirts, buttoned at the cuffs. Light colored clothing makes ticks easier to see for removal. The most effective tool is a thorough tick check after returning home from the woods.

Copies of the DNR's pamphlet Lyme Disease in Michigan are available at DNR district offices or by writing to the DNR at P.O. Box 30028, Lansing 48909.

(Bill Parker is happy to answer questions readers have regarding the outdoors. Send questions or comments to: Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.)



exercising options

Myrna Partrich

Marathon comes with pre-race exercise day

Dear Myrna: I'm a runner who would like some inside information on the Detroit International Marathon. Is it considered a difficult race? What are the requirements for entering the race? Any more details?

The 12th annual Detroit Free Press International Marathon will be held Sunday, Oct. 15. It is the ninth oldest marathon in the United States and the 27th largest in the world. This race serves as a qualifier for both the Boston Marathon and Olympic trials.

Is it a difficult race?

The 13.1 miles you are expected to run are on fairly flat surface (unlike, for instance, the Boston Marathon). Of course, no marathon is easy. My son, Ross, has run the Boston Marathon twice and thinks this marathon would not be difficult in comparison.

The requirements of running this marathon are left to you. Entries are open to those physically fit to compete. Runners under 16 years of age must have a letter of consent written by a parent or guardian.

There will be a large medical unit at the finish line and medical service along the way. Medical co-directors Dr. Robert Swetnam, D.O. and Dr. Howard Zelenak, M.D., are in charge of medical service. They and other doctors and nurses from Providence Hospital volunteer their time and skills to ensure that any physical problems experienced by runner will be diagnosed and treated properly.

I'm proud to say we at 'The Workout Company' are the exclusive marathon exercise team. We start by warming up the runners Saturday — EXPO Day — with a pre-race stretch and mind set. EXPO day includes four stretch-out sessions, exhibits catering to fitness and recreation, speakers discussing about health and fitness and a wonderful spaghetti dinner.

During the race we are stationed at 'The Wall' — the 20-mile mark. It's our job to lift the morale of the runners as they enter the most grueling part of the race.

(Myrna Partrich, co-owner of The Workout Company, Inc. of Bloomfield Township, is happy to answer any questions readers may have regarding exercise. Please send your letters to: Sports Department, Myrna Partrich, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009.)

outdoors calendar

IMPORTANT DATES

Jack Leverenz or Jim Dixon at 468-6399.

• Oct. 1 — Archery deer season opens statewide.

• Oct. 1 — Raccoon season opens statewide.

• Oct. 4 — Monthly meeting of the family-oriented Four Seasons Fishing Club will be at the Maplewood Center in Garden City. Guest speaker Art Dittmar will discuss surf fishing for salmon. New members are welcome. Call 477-3816 for more information.

• Oct. 4 — Fall turkey season opens in six management areas.

• Oct. 8-12 — Archery-only bear season in limited areas of Zone II.

• Oct. 10-20 — Pheasant season opens in areas of the Upper Peninsula.

• Oct. 11-14 — Detroit Camper and RV Show, sponsored by the Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles and Campgrounds, will be at the Pontiac Silverdome.

• Oct. 16-Nov. 14 — Firearms Sighting-In Days will be at the Western Wayne County Conservation Association 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. National Rifle Association-certified instructors will be on hand and minor gunsmithing services will be available. Call 453-9843 for more information.

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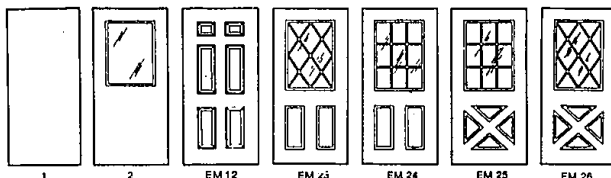
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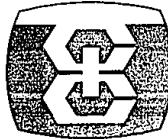
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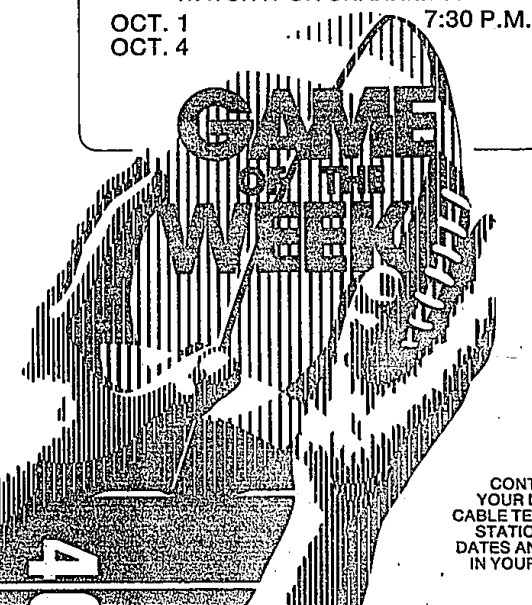
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CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CABLE TELEVISION STATION FOR DATES AND TIMES IN YOUR AREA.