**CAP health & wellness handout: Tick Protection**

Ticks can transmit Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and other significant illnesses. The risk to most population groups in the USA is at least moderate.

**Avoid Tick Bites**: The best prevention for the diseases carried by ticks is to avoid contact if possible. To this end:

* Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter, when possible.
* Walk in the center of trails.
* **Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more of DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin** for protection that lasts several hours.
* Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin.
* The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an online tool to help you select the repellent that is best for you and your family found at www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you

**Find and Remove Ticks from Your Body and clothing:** Whenever you might have been exposed to ticks, it is important to search your body and clothing as soon as possible.

* Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within 2 hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
* Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
* Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and daypacks.
* Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.

**Tick removal:** If you find a tick on yourself, remove and preserve it for later identification and testing if that proves necessary.

* Use fine-tipped tweezers or tick removal tool to grasp the tick as close to the skin’s surface as possible.
* Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don’t twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily, leave it alone and let the skin heal.

Update July 2019