



## TICK POLICY LETTER 2018

### For All Parents, Caregivers, Teens and Staff

***PREVENTION: The best prevention of tick-borne diseases is **TIMELY TICK REMOVAL**. Finding and removing all ticks takes time, scrutiny, and consistency!***

***Protective clothing*** is important in the woods against ticks and poison ivy too. Wear long pants and tuck clothing in (pants in socks, T-shirt in pants), wear a hat or bandana and tie up or braid long hair. Upon return home, leave “woodsy” clothes outside your home, or wash and dry immediately.

***Repellant*** is helpful, but no guarantee against ticks. All participants and staff, should apply tick repellant before coming to camp. Natural repellant should be reapplied.

***Tick Checks*** are a must for everyone who spends time outside. Below is our recommended tick-check routine.

***Timely Action:*** The sooner you remove a tick the better. Ideally you want to remove a tick before it bites.

***During Programs:*** We conduct intermittent tick checks during program hours within our group, pairing up participants to check each others clothing, shoes and hairline. At the end of each day, staff will remind participants to do a full body tick check and to include private areas. During overnight, we ask participants to pair up and check their buddy. In summer we check in bathing suits, and participants are asked to bring a mirror to check areas hidden from view, thoroughly.

***Removal:*** If your child has a tick that is attached during program hours, staff will remove the tick and sterilize bite area. **When a tick is removed from a participant, our staff is notified the parents by the end of the program day.** Note that if a tick is found attached towards the end of the program day, staff will ask the parents to remove it.

***Back at Home:*** Intermittent tick checks during program are not enough. Everyone still needs to do a full body tick check at home. : If you want to learn more about ticks and the various tick borne illnesses please visit the Martha's Vineyard Board of Health website: <http://www.mvboh.org/tbfaq.html>

### **TICK-CHECK ROUTINE:**

***Intermittent Tick-checks & Tick Spotting:*** While outdoors, check yourself and others periodically for ticks, on clothing, shoes, exposed skin and hair

***Full Body Tick Check:*** Perform a full body tick check at least once, preferably twice every 24 hours. Check as soon as possible, after exposure.

***“Skinspection”:*** A thorough and detailed inspection of every piece of skin, is called for. Use glasses if you have them, or a magnifying glass as **ticks can be extremely small, (the size of a point.)** Scan and examine small dots and spots, look especially well in dark places, creases, skin folds, in between fingers and toes, in belly-buttons, under underwear (bra's), private areas, behind ears, in ears and along the neck and hairline.

***“Look before you itch”:*** This is an important habit to develop, because you do not want to “scratch” the tick off, but remove it with tweezers, see point 5.

***Removal:*** Remove ticks while alive and do not suffocate, burn or kill ticks with vaseline, a lighter, or the likes. Grab the tick with pointed tweezers, as close to the skin as possible (behind the head) and pull out in the direction it went in. Clean the bite area and tweezers with alcohol right away.

***Bite-areas:*** Take extra notice of areas where you recently had a tick bite and monitor healing progress and coloration. Growing red rashes, especially a bulls eye rash indicate disease transmission, and timely action is required. See a doctor asap. Note that not everyone develops a rash, in the event of disease transmission. Bite-areas can remain red and extremely itchy for days or longer; that is normal for some people and does not indicate disease transmission.

***Antibiotics/Prophylaxis:*** If a tick has been “in” for more than 24 hours you need to talk to your doctor. In most cases, antibiotics are prescribed for a minimum of 21 days. Some off island doctors do not have accurate information on tick-borne diseases. For children approximately 10 years and over; and adults, there is another option. If a tick has been “in” for more than 24hrs. you can take a prophylactic dose within 72 hrs. of contracting the tick. A prophylactic dose consists of a one time 200mg dose of Doxycyclin. Do not take on an empty stomach.