

Lyme Disease Warning

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Every year thousands of people contract Lyme disease, a virus which is passed on to humans through contact with ticks.

A recent study has shown that ticks carrying Lyme disease are prevalent in areas of Butte County.

Action News Reporter Ross Field joins us now with more on where these ticks can be found and what to do if you get bit by this pesky bug.

As Spring approaches and outdoor activities increase, individuals need to be aware of ticks. They carry Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses and if you're not careful, a small bite could lead to big problems.

They may be small, but they pack a mighty bite.

The western black legged tick, also known as the deer tick, can carry Lyme disease, and these deadly critters are popping up all over Butte County.

Butte County Vector Control District P.I.O. Doug Weseman says the agency recently ran a surveillance test and found eighty ticks in Butte County.

Weseman says, "we do an operation called flagging, we take a piece of cloth, it catches all burs and ticks and things like that we drag it through the grass. We were up in Upper Bidwell Park, close to Bear Hole last week, and we drug several hundred yards and we came up with a lot of ticks. We also did this operation up by Lime Saddle and Loafer Creek areas up in Lake Oroville recreation area."

Ticks are often found in naturally vegetated areas. They typically attach to animals and feed on their blood over several days. Preferring cool, moist environments, ticks are found in shaded grass, shrubs, and in leaf litter under trees in oak woodlands.

Weseman adds, "they like the foothill areas, they like it moist, a lot of green grass, so if you're dog is playing in that kind of territory, or your kids are out there playing in that type of environment, check for ticks, that's the main thing, check for ticks before they start to bite."

And if you do in fact get bit...

Weseman adds, "the best way to remove a tick is to get a pair of tweezers and grab it as close to the skin as possible so you're getting the head and pull it directly out, don't corkscrew it or anything like that, grab it and pull it straight out."

Early symptoms of Lyme disease often include a spreading "bulls-eye" rash, which is usually accompanied by symptoms such as fever and body aches. If left untreated, symptoms can progress into arthritis or nervous system disorders.