Pennsylvania
Department of Health

Tick Removal Guidance for School Nurses

Act 120 of 2024, which amended the Public School Code of 1949- Health Services, takes effect December 29, 2024 after being enacted into law on October 29, 2024. This amendment requires a school nurse, school physician or designated employee of a school entity to remove a tick from a student in accordance with guidelines issued by the Secretary of Health. After removal, the tick shall:

1. Be preserved for the parent or guardian of the student to send to the Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania for testing if they choose to do so. The school entity shall provide information to the parent or guardian on how to send the tick to the Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania; or
2. Be sent directly by the school entity to the Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania for testing using the free basic panel tick test.

Pertaining to this Act, "school entity" means a school district, intermediate unit, charter school, cyber charter school, regional charter school or area career and technical school.

If sent by the school entity, upon receiving the results, the school entity shall send the original results to the student's parent or guardian without making a copy of the results or including results in the student's school medical record. The school entity, however, may, notate the disease present in the tick without identifying personal information of the child for data purposes.

After the tick is removed from the student, the school entity needs to notify the parent or guardian of the student in writing, using the prompt below as required by law. Additional resources to attach with this notice including guidance issued by the Secretary of Health on proper tick removal can be found here.

A tick was removed from your child today. Ticks can transmit disease and make people sick. A common illness caused by ticks in Pennsylvania is Lyme disease. Not all tick bites lead to Lyme disease. We advise that you record the date on which the tick was removed. It is recommended that you seek medical treatment from your child's doctor promptly if you notice any early signs or symptoms of illness within three (3) to thirty (30) days of the date of removal.

Some people with Lyme disease will get a bull's-eye rash. Others may have an atypical rash. Not everyone who has Lyme disease gets a rash. Other symptoms which may occur during the early stages of Lyme disease include chills, fever, headache, tiredness, stiff neck, joint pain or swelling and swollen lymph nodes. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. If untreated, infection may progress to joint, heart, brain or nerve abnormalities.

More information and resources on Ticks can be found on the Pennsylvania *Department of Health's website* but please contact your child's physician if there are any medical concerns.

If you have any questions regarding the requirements of this Act, please reach out to c-paschool@pa.gov.