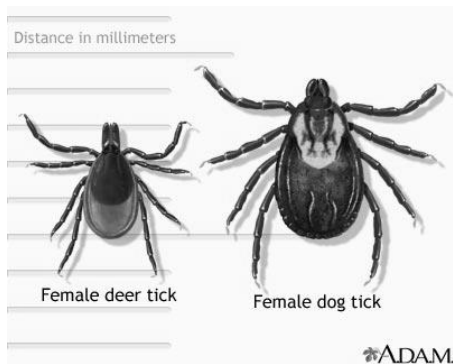


## Animal Borne Illness Fact Sheet

Any outdoor activity, including Rye Nature Center's Summer Ecology Camp, carries an inherent risk of contact with animals that can transmit diseases. Our camp staff is trained to keep your children as safe as possible. However, parents also have a responsibility to understand the risks, take appropriate preventative measures and seek prompt professional medical attention if signs and symptoms of disease appear. According to the Westchester County Health Department, three diseases are of particular concern in our area at this time: Lyme Disease, West Nile Virus (a form of Encephalitis) and Rabies.

### Lyme Disease



Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection which can be transmitted to people by deer ticks. Deer ticks are found on mice, birds, and deer. They may be as small as the period on a printed page and grow up to 3 millimeters in size.

The tick embeds itself in the skin and engorges on blood. If not removed within 24 hours, bacteria may be transmitted.

A rash may develop around the tick bite in 3 to 30 days. Other symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain.

If untreated, it can cause neurological, heart and joint damage. Lyme Disease can be detected with medical tests and treated with antibiotics.

For a more detailed fact sheet, see the Centers for Disease Control website at [cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/index.htm](http://cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/index.htm).

### West-Nile Virus

West Nile Encephalitis is caused by a mosquito borne virus. Not all mosquitoes are infected with the virus and not all mosquito bites transmit the disease.

Most infected people exhibit no symptoms. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have mild, flu-like symptoms. About one in 150 people will develop severe symptoms including high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These may be life-threatening.

Since West-Nile Encephalitis is caused by a virus, there is no specific treatment for low grade symptoms. If you or your child develops symptoms of severe illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

For more information, see the Centers for Disease Control fact sheet at [cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv\\_factSheet.htm](http://cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv_factSheet.htm).

## **Prevention of Lyme Disease and West Nile Encephalitis:**

Lyme Disease and West Nile Encephalitis are best prevented by avoiding the animal vectors of these diseases. To protect your child during our day camp programs:

1. Our ponds are inspected by the Westchester County Health Department annually to insure that West-Nile Virus carrying mosquito species are not living in our ponds.
2. Our staff conducts a “Tick Check,” inspecting unprotected (unclothed) skin on all children at lunchtime and at the end of each camp day.
3. You must check your child more thoroughly at home, especially areas covered by clothing that we do not check. Remove ticks by pulling gently on the head (not the body) with fine tweezers. Use a disinfectant on the bitten area.
4. Change and launder clothes immediately when you get home to remove any ticks clinging to the fabric.
5. Insect repellent applied to your child's socks and clothing can act as a deterrent to deer ticks and mosquitoes. Staff is NOT permitted to apply insect repellent to campers. If you would like to protect your child in this way, please apply repellent prior to or upon arrival at the Nature Center.

## **Rabies**

Rabies is a viral disease carried by mammals that can only be transmitted through bites and direct contact with bodily fluids. Since rabies affects the brain, rabid animals may show unusual behavior such as aggression, fearlessness, abnormal posture, seizures, weakness or paralysis.

People can contract rabies from wildlife such as bats, foxes, raccoons, and skunks or through pets which have come into contact with infected wildlife. Small rodents, such as chipmunks, hamsters, mice, rabbits, and squirrels, do not typically carry rabies.

Rabies is a fatal disease that cannot be treated once the symptoms have appeared. Rabies can be confirmed only in a laboratory. Therefore, it is critically important to capture and test the animal that exhibits signs of rabies. It is critically important to see your doctor or the emergency room immediately.

For more information see the Center For Disease Control website at [cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/kidsrabies](http://cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/kidsrabies).

## **Prevention of Rabies**

The mammals in our exhibits have been vaccinated. Our staff will keep your children out of contact with any potentially infected wild animals. The following measures may prevent infection at home year round:

1. Be sure all pets are vaccinated.
2. Do NOT take in or feed stray animals, either wild or domestic.
3. Do not handle dead animals without proper precautions.