

The Whitehall Wildlife Management Committee was formed in January and has since met three times to discuss the many complex aspects of wildlife management in Whitehall. At the center of those meetings were the concerns expressed by residents at the September 10, 2015 community conversation organized by Mayor Jim Nowalk. As part of a long-term plan, this advisory committee will research, discuss, and propose recommendations. The first step in that plan is to provide Whitehall residents with more detailed information about Lyme disease. Below are some important facts about how Lyme disease is detected, spread, and prevented. Lyme disease IS curable. Please share this information with everyone you know.

#### POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Lyme disease is carried by what is known as the **black-legged tick**, often referred to as the **deer tick**. The name deer tick is misleading, because many mammals other than deer can act as hosts for the black-legged tick.
- Only bites from the infected black-legged tick can cause Lyme disease.** About half of the black-legged tick population is infected.
- Woodland rodents such as **chipmunks and mice are primary carriers** of the tick in its pre-adult stage, but **other animals, including deer and even birds**, are hosts in the adult stage.
- Ticks live in moist, shady environments** near wooded or grassy areas, so **keep your property free of debris** such as leaves. To discourage rodent food sources, remove any acorns and choose bird feeders that minimize bird food falling on the ground.
- Wear light-colored clothing** when venturing outdoors so ticks can be spotted. In wooded or grassy areas, **wear long sleeves and tuck pants into socks or shoes.**
- Use a suitable repellent on your skin AND clothing, shoes too!**
- Another preventive measure is to **inspect your body and then shower.** (Be sure to check under arms, inside bellybuttons, between legs, behind knees, in and around the ear area, all head and body hair areas, and around the waist.) **Don't forget to check your pets!**



- Removing a tick promptly (within 24-36 hours) can PREVENT Lyme disease.** If a tick has just attached itself, it will be smaller. If it has had time to withdraw blood, it will appear swollen. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, then pull up with steady, even pressure until you extract the tick – try not to twist or jerk as this might break off mouth parts. **Never crush a tick with your fingers when attempting to remove it and never use petroleum jelly, nail polish, or a hot match to kill and remove a tick.** (These methods do not get the tick off the skin but can cause the insect to burrow deeper and release more saliva, increasing the chances of disease transmission.)
- Clean the bite site and your hands with alcohol, iodine, or soap and water.** Put the tick in alcohol in a small bag or container so it can be examined. If you wish to dispose of the tick, the best way is to flush it down a toilet.
- Report any tick bites to your doctor immediately.** The onset of symptoms may vary but usually occurs within two weeks after the bite. **A common sign is a red spot with a red ring around it.**



You may also visit the Whitehall Public Library website [www.whitehallpubliclibrary.org](http://www.whitehallpubliclibrary.org) and from the Get Answers tab, select the Community Resources menu option. Under Local, click on the Wildlife Management link. The Library has an excellent reference book entitled Tick Management Handbook as well.

For a YouTube video geared to children, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sU8wLgXZ92M>.



For questions about the Whitehall Wildlife Management Committee, you may contact Mayor Jim Nowalk - phone 412-884-1100 or email [jnowalk@fyi.net](mailto:jnowalk@fyi.net).

**Fun Fact:** Opossums combat ticks! Find out how on the library website.

The information above was taken from the Allegheny County Health Department <http://www.achd.net/factsheet/lyme.html> and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/>.



As this article was being prepared for inclusion in the Whitehall Borough Report, the Allegheny County Health Department was advising that 16 county residents were being tested for the Zika virus. The Zika virus is a disease spread primarily through bites of humans by an infected Aedes species mosquito. Since the May 2015 Pan American Health Organization alert about the presence of the virus in Brazil, the disease has spread northward through South and Central America

and the Caribbean Region to the fringes of the Southern United States. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) reports the most common symptoms are a fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). If you anticipate travel to an area where environmental and climatic conditions are favorable to the presence of mosquitoes, precautions to avoid being bitten by infected mosquitoes are strongly advised by health

## BEWARE OF THE ZIKA VIRUS

officials as there is presently no vaccine to prevent or treat the virus. The presence of the virus in the blood of an infected person remains for a week or more in most persons, but can remain longer. The incubation period between the infecting bite until

exhibiting symptoms is not accurately known, but is presently believed to be between a few days to a week. Note that mosquitoes that carry the Zika virus are also carriers of the dengue and chikungunya viruses.



#### When traveling take the following precautions:

- When possible, stay in air conditioned accommodations and use window screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your sleeping quarters. Use mosquito netting to protect beds and infant cribs from mosquitoes and other airborne insects.
- Use recommended insect repellents and carefully follow application instructions.
- Avoid or eliminate standing pools of stagnant water where mosquitoes can propagate.
- Visit the CDC's Travelers Health Website for more localized travel information and travel tips. (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/zika>).