Lyme Disease

Pre-reading

Questions:
- Did you know that you can get a disease from a tick bite?
- What do you know about Lyme disease?

Definitions:
- Symptom – something that happens in the body that means there may be a disease
- Paralysis – losing the ability to move a body part
- Persistent – something that doesn’t go away easily

Reading

Lyme disease is caused by the bite of an infected deer tick. The disease affects both humans and animals. To get Lyme disease, a person must be bitten by a deer tick that is infected with the Lyme disease bacteria. Not all deer ticks are infected with the bacteria, so not all deer ticks transmit the disease. The tick must be attached to the body for at least 24-48 hours to transmit the bacteria.

The symptoms of Lyme disease may be different for each person. People often feel like they have the flu. In just a few days, a person may get a rash, fever, chills, headache, muscle pain and may feel tired. As time goes on, a person may get several rashes, paralysis on one side of the face, or stiffness or numbness in their arms or legs. They may also have persistent weakness and fatigue.

If a person suspects Lyme disease, he or she should contact a doctor immediately. Early diagnosis and treatment can reduce the time a person is ill. Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics to kill the bacteria. The antibiotics work better the earlier the disease is diagnosed.

To prevent getting Lyme disease, here are some tips:
- If you are walking or hiking, stay on the paths or trails.
- Do not go into areas with lots of trees and bushes during May, June and July.
- Use a good tick repellant.
- Keep your lawns mowed and bushes trimmed.
- Have your dog vaccinated for Lyme disease.
- Check your dog or cat for ticks before allowing them in the house.
- Check often for ticks on yourself, children, and pets.

If you find a tick on yourself or someone else, don’t panic, but remove the tick promptly. If possible, use a pair of tweezers to grasp the tick by the head. Grasp the tick close to the skin and pull the tick outward slowly, gently and steadily. Do not squeeze the tick. Use an antiseptic on the bite.

After the tick is removed, see a doctor immediately if you have any symptoms of Lyme disease.

Adapted from the MN Department of Health’s Lyme Disease Fact Sheet
Understanding

1. What are some symptoms of Lyme disease? ___________________________________________________________________________________
2. What months of the year should you stay out of areas with lots of trees and bushes? ____________
3. How is Lyme disease treated? ___________________________________________________________________________________
4. What should you do if you find a tick on yourself? _____________________________________________________________________________
5. What does the word transmit mean? _____________________________________________________________________________________
6. How long must the tick be attached to the body to transmit the Lyme disease bacteria? ____________
7. What does the word suspects mean in this article?
   a. To have doubts, or distrust about something or someone.
   b. A group of people that the police think committed a crime.
   c. To think or guess that something is true.

Writing

Option A: If you have had a tick bite, tell how the tick was removed and if it was removed the right way.
Option B: In your own words, summarize what you know about Lyme disease.