



**2015 Tickborne Disease Season Advisory**

**TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities**  
**FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, Commissioner for Public Health and State Health Officer, WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health**  
**DATE: April 16, 2015**

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO MEMBERS, STAFF, AND OTHER PARTNERS

Tickborne diseases occur annually in West Virginia with most cases developing symptoms between April and September. Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tickborne disease in West Virginia. There were 143 confirmed and probable cases reported in both 2013; 136 cases were reported in 2014. There are currently seven counties in West Virginia that are endemic for Lyme disease: Berkeley, Hampshire, Hancock, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Wood Counties. Wood County became endemic as of 2015.

Tickborne rickettsial diseases (TBRDs), such as anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, have also been reported in the state. TBRDs are characterized by acute onset of fever, headache, and myalgia. Symptoms can also include anemia, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, and elevated hepatic transaminases. TBRDs can be confused with other illnesses, and serologic results are often negative during the first week of illness.

Laboratory testing is important for diagnosing tickborne diseases. For Lyme disease, a two-tiered testing approach is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: an IFA/EIA screen followed by IgG and IgM Western blots. For TBRDs, the gold standard test is IFA using pathogen-specific antigen performed on paired serum specimens (one taken during the first week of illness and another taken two to four weeks later). Doxycycline is the first line of treatment for Lyme disease and TBRDs and should be initiated as appropriate whenever any of these diseases are suspected.

While ticks are mostly active during warm months, it is important to be vigilant year-round as some species can reappear during breaks in cold weather. It is important to remind patients to conduct tick checks on themselves (and their pets) when visiting wooded areas. The use of insect repellent is also important in preventing tickborne diseases. Please work with your local health department to provide timely reporting of tickborne disease cases and patient information necessary for surveillance.

For more information about tickborne diseases in West Virginia, visit the Division of Infectious Disease website at [www.dide.wv.gov](http://www.dide.wv.gov). You may also contact your local health department or call DIDE at (800) 423-1271 ext. 1 or (304) 558-5358, ext. 1.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

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