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LYME DISEASE AWARENESS

In the month of May the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is focusing on Environmental Health issues. First up, Lyme disease. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks. Within 1 to 2 weeks of being infected, people may have a “bull’s-eye” rash with fever, headache and muscle or joint pain. Other people may have a fever and other “flu-like” symptoms without a rash. Antibiotics are usually effective, especially if treatment is started early. Lyme disease has now been reported in at least 47 states, mainly in the northeast and north-central states.

Listed below are 5 steps to protect yourself from Lyme disease:

1. Avoid entering areas likely to be infested with ticks, particularly in the spring and summer.
2. Wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks easily and dress properly if going into tick infested areas.
3. Apply insect repellents, containing DEET, to clothing and skin. You may also use safe tick-control products on your pets.
4. Check for ticks daily and remove them promptly. Don’t forget your pets! Embedded ticks should be removed using fine-tipped tweezers. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic.
5. Remove leaf litter, brush and wood piles around your home to reduce the likelihood that ticks will live there.

For more information regarding Lyme Disease or West Nile virus, you may also contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency at one of our three locations: Coldwater (517) 279-9561 ext. 106, Hillsdale (517) 437-7395 ext. 111, Three Rivers (269) 273-2161 ext. 233 or visit our website at

www.bhsj.org.