

TICK PRECAUTIONS

To: Researchers Working with Ticks

From: Environmental Health & Safety

Tick Precautions

Date: October 2, 1997

The Biosafety Office has been alerted of a possible tick-related lab-acquired infection of Lyme disease on campus related to a failure to wear adequate personal protective equipment while working with ticks. We are sending this memo to remind you of the importance of following good microbiological practices when working with ticks and to standardize containment and the use of personal protective equipment on campus.

Restricted Access

- Ensure that ticks are housed in a designated area within the animal facility or research laboratory.
- Employ secondary (water trays) and tertiary (white sticky matting) containment to confine ticks in animal rooms. Use both primary and secondary containment when housing ticks in your laboratory. Also use two unbreakable leak-proof containers for on-campus transport.
- Check that the Biohazard Sign is posted at the entry to your laboratory along with the information card detailing the nature of the work within your area.
- Restrict access to tick rooms to those who are involved in the research or who have been informed of the hazard.
- Ensure that all researchers working with ticks receive training in the appropriate work practices. Periodically verify that containment is maintained.

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Keep a supply of personal protective equipment available in the animal suite area and your laboratory.
- Assign responsibility for maintaining the stock of protective clothing to a lab member and monitor compliance.
- Wear disposable, white solid-front gowns with tight knit or grip cuffs.
- Use gloves that are long enough to fit over the cuff of the gown sleeve. Train employees to wear protective clothing appropriately.
- If possible, researchers should wear lighter colored clothing when working with ticks. Dark pants and shirts should be avoided.
- Wear face protection (face shield or mask and safety glasses) if splash, splatter or aerosol may be generated outside of a biosafety cabinet.
- Place all disposable protective clothing worn for work with infected ticks in a biomedical waste container or bag at end of the experiment or work day. Clothing worn in animal suites housing infected ticks must not be worn outside of the room.
- Wash hands with soap and water after removing personal protective equipment.

Self-Inspection:

- All workers must survey their clothing and skin for the presence of ticks after removing personal protective clothing. All exit self-inspections must be documented on a log sheet (see attached).
- Place log sheets at exit door of research areas designated for work with ticks for documentation of required self-inspection surveys. Maintain log sheets for your records and review by the Biosafety Office.
- Researchers working with ticks should also inspect for the presence of ticks at home.

Report Incidents:

- Report attached ticks to your Principal Investigator or Lab Supervisor immediately, and seek medical evaluation at Yale Health's Employee Health Department (432-7978), 55 Lock Street.
- Report any missing animals to your Principal Investigator, Lab Supervisor, and a representative from the Yale Animal Resources Center immediately (785-4722).
- The Principal Investigator or Lab Supervisor must report incidents to the Biosafety Office (785-3550) as soon as feasible.

A representative from the EHS will visit your laboratory periodically to monitor your facility and procedures, and to answer any question you may have regarding safety.