

What you need to know about **POWASSAN VIRUS**

WHAT IS POWASSAN VIRUS?

- Powassan virus (POWV) is a tick-borne encephalitic virus similar to those viruses spread by mosquitoes (e.g. West Nile virus).
- It is the only tick-borne encephalitic virus in North America.

VERY RARE!
Only 75 cases in last decade

HOW COMMON IS IT?

- POWV is very rare. **Only 75 cases have been reported in the U.S. in the last decade (compared to more than 300,000 cases of Lyme disease reported each year)**
- On average, less than 10 cases are reported each year, and less than 5% of blacklegged (deer) ticks are carrying the virus (20% of nymphs and 50% of adult deer ticks are infected with Lyme disease)

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF?

- **Wear permethrin-treated clothing and footwear when in tick habitat.**
- Consider wearing skin repellent like DEET (15-33%), (reapply roughly every 4 hours).
- Conduct regular tick checks while outdoors and after returning home.

Tuck



Treat



Check



Adults (female/male)
October - Early May



Nymphs
May - August



Larvae
July - September

SYMPTOMS

- Most people who are exposed to the virus never develop the disease.
- Symptoms of POWV include **fever, headache, vomiting, and confusion and disorientation from meningitis and encephalitis** (brain swelling).
- Ten-fifteen percent of people who show symptoms die, and 50% of those who survive illness have long-term neurological damage (e.g. headaches, memory problems).



15 minutes
to transmit from infected tick

TRANSMISSION

- Unlike most tick-borne bacteria that take hours to days of feeding to transmit an infectious dose, **POWV can be transmitted from an infected tick in as little as 15 minutes.**
- The **blacklegged (deer) tick is the most implicated in transmitting this disease to humans.**
- Field studies have shown that the American dog tick does not carry POWV.
- The Rocky Mountain wood tick is not suspected to transmit this disease to humans.



<http://bit.ly/powassanvirus>