

St. Peter's Preschool Newsletter



May 2021 – by Rita Dai Wang

It's sad to say, but we are nearing the end! May 28th is our last official day of the 2020-2021 school year. Thank you all for entrusting your children to us. This has been quite a rollercoaster of a year, but I think we can unequivocally call it a success! Thank you for all your support and flexibility with the everchanging COVID policies. We couldn't have done it without you!

Picture Day: Our Picture Days went very smoothly, and I cannot wait to see how the photos came out! We will be sharing thumbnails for you to preview with instructions on how to purchase images in the next few weeks.

Graduation: We will be holding the 4's Graduation in our outdoor nature space on Friday 5/28 at 12:00. Friends and family members are invited, but in light of the pandemic, we are asking families to bring their own chairs, sit in socially distant family groups, and wear a mask. If it rains, we will move the event inside the chapel, so cross your fingers for good weather! More information will come home soon.

End of Year Picnics: We will be having 2 End of Year Picnics this year! The **2's** will be on Thursday 5/27 at 12:00. There will be no Lunch Bunch this day. Instead, the school will be providing pizza and popsicles for anyone interested in attending. We will be holding this event on our playground/blacktop. Feel free to bring your own picnic lunches if you prefer as well as chairs and picnic blankets.

On Friday 5/28, we will have the End of Year Picnic for our **3's/4's**, also on our playground/blacktop. Since the kids will have already eaten lunch earlier in the day, the school will provide popsicles and other desserts. Feel free to bring chairs and picnic blankets.

End of Year Survey: We are always trying to make our program the best it can be, and I would greatly value your feedback. This year in particular, we have had many new protocols we had to follow, some of which we may keep in place next year. Please take a moment to fill out an anonymous survey. Thank you in advance for your help! <https://forms.gle/r8mvGRbJnBuYcJM9>

Packets for next year: In the 2 weeks, I will send home packets of information for those who will be returning next year. Please read through the paperwork and return forms either before school ends, over the summer, or at Meet the Teacher Day in August. Thanks!

Tuition payments for 2021-2022: If you have registered your child for next year, your first tuition payment is due August 1st. You can either mail in the August payment, drop it off at school, or pay online via our website. Don't forget we have a locked mailbox at the foot of the driveway with a slot into which you can slide envelopes for me. Just make sure to put my name on the envelope. Subsequent tuition payments will be due on the first of the month from September – April. There will be no payment in May. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!

Next year: As of right now, MSDE has not changed any of their COVID guidelines for schools. We are planning to be fully open in person, like this year, but we may still need to be masked and do symptom screening. Hopefully, guidelines will change over the summer. I will keep you posted!

Dates to Remember

- 5/3-5/7 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 5/10-5/14 DIY Stepping Stones
- 5/27 Last Day of School (2's)
- 5/27 End of Year Picnic (2's) 12:00
- 5/28 Last Day of School (3's/4's)
- 5/28 Graduation (4's) 12:00
- 5/28 End of Year Picnic (3's/4's) 1:00
- 6/7-6/11 Science Camp (Wk 1)
- 6/14-6/18 Science Camp (Wk 2)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 5/13 Grayson Sabatini
- 5/28 Dominic Durso
- 6/10 Cole Barrett-Castano
- 6/20 Owen Wagner
- 6/20 Cameron Palmer
- 6/25 Colin Antlitz
- 7/9 Dominic Dorsey
- 7/11 Ms. Annie
- 7/29 Gabriel Poulos
- 8/10 Jace NEcaise
- 8/12 Ms. Brenda

DIY Stepping Stones

During the week of 5/10-5/14, you are invited to come to school to create a stepping stone with your child. These will go in our nature space. Keep an eye out for a Signup Genius with more details soon!



Here is the latest guidance from the CDC on the risk levels of various activities depending on whether you are vaccinated/unvaccinated or inside/outside. I hope you will find this visual helpful.

Choosing Safer Activities

	Unvaccinated People	Your Activity	Fully Vaccinated People
		Outdoor	
Safest		Walk, run, or bike outdoors with members of your household	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	
Least Safe		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	
		Indoor	
Less Safe		Visit a barber or hair salon	
		Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	
		Ride public transport with limited occupancy	
		Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	
Least Safe		Go to an indoor movie theater	
		Attend a full-capacity worship service	
		Sing in an indoor chorus	
		Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	
		Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	

Get a COVID-19 vaccine



Prevention measures not needed



Take prevention measures

Fully vaccinated people: wear a mask

Unvaccinated people: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).

- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.

Here is an article from researcher and economist Emily Oster about ticks and the risk of Lyme disease. We are in high tick territory, and with kids spending more time outdoors due to warmer weather, it is definitely something to watch out for.



Ticks

That's it, this is just a post about ticks.



Emily Oster
April 19

One Monday afternoon in the fall of 2019 I got a text from our babysitter which said something to the effect of, “I found a tick on Finn’s face. What should I do?” Obviously, I choose the adult option of “panic”. I rushed home, calling Jesse on the way, to look at it and remove it.

The tick, when I arrived home, was right there on his cheek, a tiny black dot. I realized, of course, I had seen this at breakfast and assumed it was dirt (yes, I bathe my children. Sometimes.). I pried it off and put it in a little plastic bag, then took some photos and tried to figure out what to do.

Thus ensued a week or so of serious tick research, involving several doctor calls, extensive searches of *UpToDate* and a long email exchange with Jesse about next steps. I was tempted to include that email exchange verbatim in this post, but I think actually seeing inside our work process might be a little too real.

The culmination of that, though, was a better plan for what to do if this happened again, which I’ll describe to you below. It was a good thing, too, since our family is apparently a bunch of tick magnets. Finn had another one a few weeks later, then I did, and finally Jesse. Only Penelope has been spared (so far; it’s only a matter of time.)

What is the problem with ticks? Is it all ticks?

Ticks can spread a number of different diseases but by far the biggest concern in terms of numbers is *Lyme disease*. Lyme is caused by a bacteria, which is spread through the bite of blacklegged ticks (sometimes called deer ticks). The disease causes fever, fatigue and — often but not always — a particular bulls-eye pattern skin

rash. It can be treated with antibiotics. *But:* if left untreated (either through lack of detection or confusion about the cause) it can cause serious and possibly long-term health problems. It's much harder to treat at this stage.

Conclusion: you do not want to get Lyme disease, or have your child get it.

Not all ticks spread Lyme; it's only deer ticks. A little cheat sheet is below. Of note is that dog ticks are much bigger. But if you are not an expert you may need some help figuring it out (one pediatrician I talked to told me "most of the calls we get turn out to be dog ticks").

Which is why you should save the tick, despite your presumed instinct to flush it or, in my husband's case, microwave it.

In the spring, you'll get a lot of active nymph ticks, which are especially good at spreading Lyme and are also tiny so *even a very good parent could totally think they were dirt*. Adult ticks are more common in the fall.



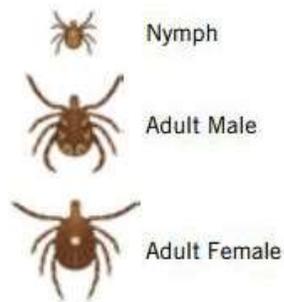
Deer Tick



Dog Tick



Lonestar Tick (CDC PHOTO)



images not to scale
Source: Atlantic Pest Solutions

I found a tick on my kid (or on me!) What do I do?

First, take it off. To do this, you can use the CDC method involving tweezers. OR: you can use the *dizzy tick* method, illustrated in this [amazing video](#). I'll wait. Don't throw it away!

Second: think about the length of time the tick was possibly *attached to* the victim. Lyme disease is spread through a tick bite, not just a tick walking around, so it's key to think about when the tick actually sunk its teeth in.

This may be hard to know (this is part of the value of tick checks - see below). But often you will have a sense of the timing. In our case (for example) we had been hiking in a tick-heavy area the Saturday before, and I had a photo making clear the tick was NOT on Finn's face Sunday mid-day. It must have been somewhere else (in his hair? eww), crawling around looking for a good spot. But it clearly *was* there Monday morning, when I thought it was dirt. We effectively narrowed the time range to something like 6 to 18 hours of tick attachment time.

This is important because tick attachment time closely relates to the risk of Lyme transmission. One study found a 25% Lyme rate in bites with more than 72 hour attachment versus no cases in those with less. A second shows a similar difference between before and after 72 hours. Mice studies corroborate this, showing that before 48 hours of attachment time, transmission is extremely unlikely.

If the tick was attached for a limited amount of time (say, less than 36 hours), a good course of action is to keep an eye on it but not to do anything else. (You should probably still tell your pediatrician, just so they are aware.)

In the case where the tick is attached for longer (or you do not know how long it's been), you're at another decision node. Specifically: there is a question of whether to (A) wait and see if a Lyme-indicating rash develops and treat if it does or (B) treat in advance ("prophylaxis"), typically with an antibiotic called *doxycycline*.

The idea with option (B) is that this advance treatment would mean less likelihood of developing Lyme disease at all. There is a medium-sized randomized controlled trial (482 people) which demonstrated that this works, significantly lowering rates of later illness. However: the small size of the trial makes it hard to pin down exactly how protective the treatment was.

The argument for option (A) — just waiting — lies in the fact that most people who are bitten by a tick do not develop Lyme disease. Further, in 80% of cases a rash will show up as a symptom and, if it does, treatment is very effective at that stage (this number is perhaps 90% in children). Together, this means that treating everyone with prophylaxis entails a lot of unnecessary treatment, which raises concerns about over-use of antibiotics and, more immediately, has a reasonably high rate of side effects.

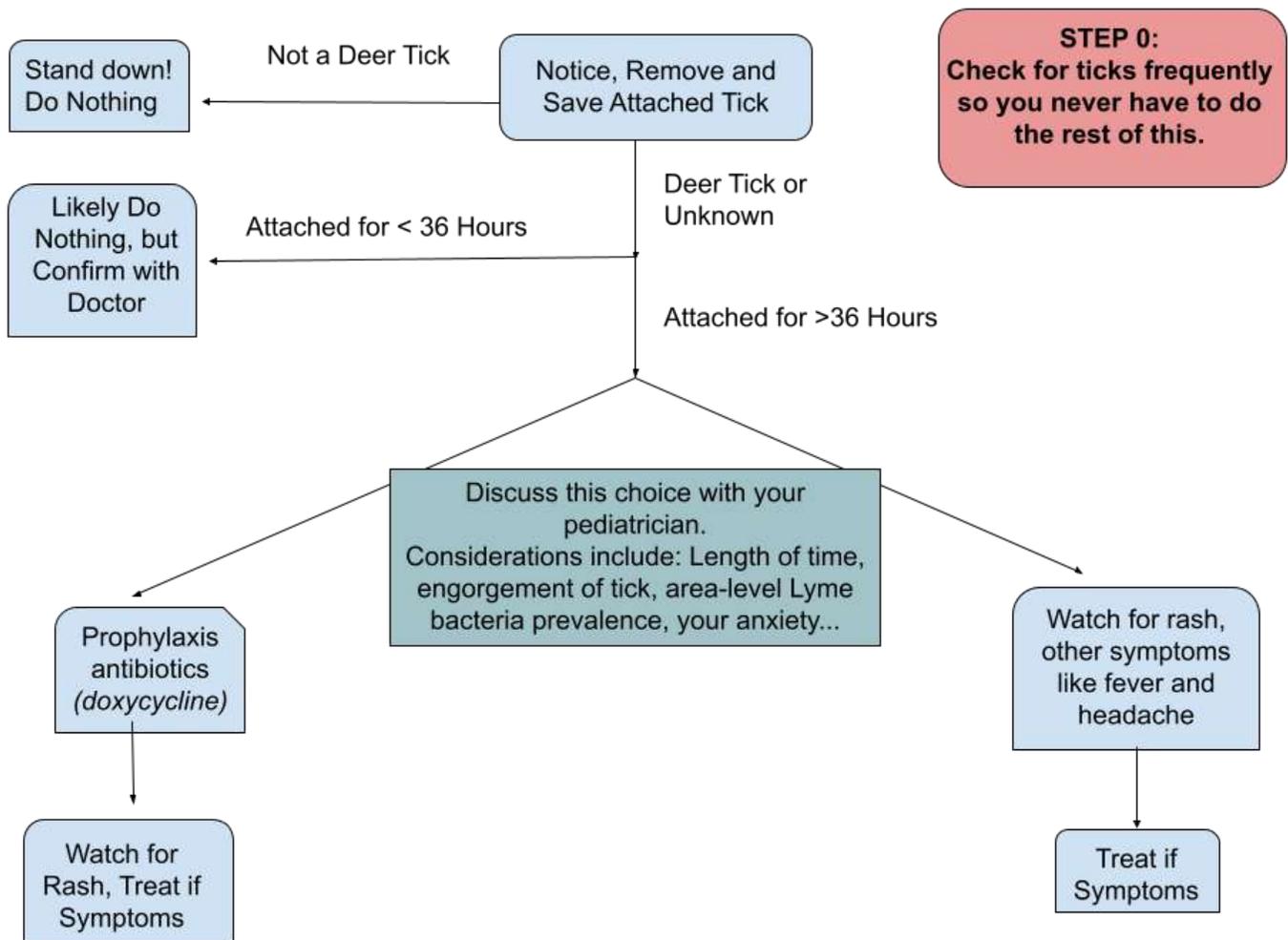
The argument for option B is that if one *is* in the 10 to 20% of people who get Lyme and do not show a rash, much more serious illness can develop. If early treatment can lower that risk, it might make sense.

There is no obvious answer here and medical advice seems to linger on trying to isolate prophylaxis treatment to cases where Lyme is more likely — if you can be sure it was a deer tick, if it was on for a long time, if it was engorged with blood and if you're in an area with a higher prevalence of the Lyme-causing bacteria (New England, some of the Mid-Atlantic, parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin).

The non-obviousness of this choice means you surely want to discuss with a doctor. I talked to three I trust a lot and they all told me a version of the above, but noted that they try to learn a lot more about the case and also evaluate the level of parental anxiety.

Regardless of which option you go with, you still want to be alert for a rash. Which, by the way, isn't going to itch or be raised or anything — it's a flat rash with a specific bullseye pattern. Note this can be harder to see on the face or scalp and on darker skinned people, where it sometimes looks more like a bruise.

Confused yet? Here's a little decision graphic.



Prevention: Tick Checks and DEET

One of the things the above makes clear is that the best way to deal with this is to not have a tick attached to you for a long time. In a way, this is very reassuring since you can check for ticks and take them off if you see one. If you are living in a tick-heavy area, it is a good general habit to check everyone for ticks after any extensive time outside.

This just means looking at everyone totally naked and seeing if there are any odd-looking marks. It's actually quite a bit easier with kids because they do not have a lot of body hair and old scars and moles. But you should also check adults! It sounds weird but, really, it is the easiest way.

You may also want to use insect repellent, which will keep ticks away to at least some extent (and also mosquitos, which are a whole other ballgame and I'll leave for another day). But then people worry about DEET! Non-DEET repellents do not work as well but...is DEET a poison?

Technically, yes. And like all chemicals of this type, a lot of care must be taken with not ingesting it. But the concerns many parents have is that DEET may be a dangerous neurotoxin, even when used correctly.

In response, [I give you this review article](#), entitled "Is DEET a Dangerous Neurotoxicant?" To which the answer (by their reporting) is "No". The CDC and other official bodies (notably the AAP) also support the use of DEET-containing repellants, although they note that you do not need "100% DEET" and, in fact, recommend no more than 30% DEET in repellants. These recommendations are based on the fact that data doesn't suggest DEET is a neurotoxin in normal usage.

Everyone urges some caution — you should be careful not to spray repellent at kids faces, or get it on their hands, or really anything in which they could ingest it. And like with sunscreen: if possible, clothing coverage is better than repellent. But DEET also works better than anything else so if you're going to be in a very insect-infested area, it's a reasonable choice.

A Final Word

My mom told me recently I should write a post on "What you *should* worry about." Here it is! Ticks. I mean, don't obsess about them. But would I think you are crazy for doing a tick check every day that your family is outside in the yard? No, I would not.

Thank you on this post to Dr. Lauren Ward (our pediatrician!), Dr. Lauren Allister & Dr. Adam Davis for their consultation and tick removal videos.

SUMMER BUCKET LIST

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO THE BEACH | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO THE ZOO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | VISIT A MUSEUM | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO STORY TIME |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | EXPLORE AN AQUARIUM | <input type="checkbox"/> | WATCH FIREWORKS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | TAKE A HIKE | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO ON A ROAD TRIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PLAY IN A SPLASH PAD | <input type="checkbox"/> | WATCH A BASEBALL GAME |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PICNIC IN THE PARK | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO ON A BOAT RIDE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PLAY AT THE PLAYGROUND | <input type="checkbox"/> | EAT FROM A FOOD TRUCK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BACKYARD WATER PARK | <input type="checkbox"/> | BLOW BUBBLES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | DRAW WITH SIDEWALK CHALK | <input type="checkbox"/> | EAT AN ICE CREAM CONE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FIND A COOL MURAL | <input type="checkbox"/> | HAVE A CAMP FIRE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO AN OUTDOOR CONCERT | <input type="checkbox"/> | GET MESSY! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO A PETTING ZOO OR FARM | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO A GARDEN OR NATURE CENTER | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO AN ORCHARD OR FARMER'S MARKET | | |

