

GROW Home, Garden & Outdoors

Be on the LOOKOUT for ticks

One young girl overcomes tick ordeal

By Angel Carpenter
EO Medio Group

JOHN DAY – You don't have to wander far to find ticks, and while they may be small, the damage they cause, at times, can be mighty.

A tick found 5-year-old Zoey Rookstool during a recent family outing to a softball game in John Day.

Luckily, no harm came of that tick, but that wasn't the case two years ago.

The morning of April 24, 2013, Zoey's mom, Heather, found that her daughter had fallen out of bed.

Concerned that their normally active child couldn't stand on her own or talk, Heather and her husband, Zane, took Zoey to the emergency room at Blue Mountain Hospital.

While doctors searched for the cause of the little girl's illness, as a precaution they treated her for a tick bite – with antibiotics – and later that morning Heather found two ticks at the nape of her daughter's neck.

"I've never been so glad to see a tick in my entire life," Heather said.

Zoey had been suffering from tick paralysis.

The disease is rare and thought to be caused by a toxin in a female tick's saliva (mainly Rocky Mountain wood tick, American dog tick and Lone Star tick) – after being attached for a prolonged period (several days), the engorged tick transmits the toxin, causing paralysis.

Most cases of tick paralysis affecting humans have been reported among girls un-

der age 10 during April-June.

The risk is greatest for children living in rural areas, especially in the Northwest.

Once the tick is removed symptoms of paralysis usually clear up within 24 hours, but if the tick is not removed, the toxin can be fatal.

After the tick was removed from Zoey, she was talking two hours later, using her hands six hours later and able to walk 26 hours later.

In a couple days she was dancing.

Lyme disease is another worry where ticks are concerned; however, the risk of acquiring the tick-borne infection is also low.

Prevention is the best method of avoiding potentially serious complications of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses.

Precautions include: Wear shoes, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants when you go outside. Keep ticks away from your skin by tucking your pants into your socks. Wear light colors so you

can spot any ticks that get on your clothes

Use bug sprays to keep ticks off your skin or clothes

Shower within two hours of being outdoors if you think you have been in an area where there are ticks

Check your clothes and body for ticks after being outdoors. Be sure to check your scalp, waist, armpits, groin, and backs of your knees. Check your children, too.

If you live in a place that has deer or mice nearby, take steps to keep those animals away. Deer and mice carry ticks.

If you or your child is bitten by a tick, take note of the tick's color and size, if it was attached to your skin or just resting on your skin, if it was big, round, and full of blood.

Ticks should be removed promptly using the proper technique.

Dr. Zac Bailey of Strawberry Mountain Community Clinic had this advice: "The best way to remove a tick is to use tweezers and grasp it as close to the

skin as possible, pulling it off with gentle pressure."

Further advice from experts includes:

- Do not squeeze, crush, or puncture the body of the tick, since its bodily fluids may contain infection-causing organisms.

- After removing the tick, wash the skin and hands thoroughly with soap and water.

- If any mouth parts of the tick remain in the skin, these should be left alone; they will be expelled on their own. Attempts to remove these parts may result in significant skin trauma.

Heather said she's noticed that ticks are abundant this year.

When Zoey became ill in 2013, they hadn't been out to the woods, only in the yard and at the park.

"People only check their kids when they go in the mountains, but you don't have to be at the woods," Heather said. "I think parents need to check their kids – it doesn't take but a few seconds."

Information on ticks, including prevention and removal, was obtained from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Linden Hu, MD from the "UpToDate" website.

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Josie Hollowell of John Day helps her mother, Renee, weed a bed at the John Day Community Garden.

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Let's grow!

All are welcome to reap benefits of the JD Community Garden

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – People enjoy community gardens for a variety of reasons. Some don't have any place of their own to plant. Or maybe they've got plenty of space, but have used it all up, with seeds left over. And some people just like the "community" aspect – planting, growing, socializing and sharing with others. Whatever the reason, the John Day Community Garden welcomes one and all to enjoy the goodness of this local asset, now going on its sixth successful year. Excess produce is donated to local food pantries. Special occasions at the garden often include meals cooked in the garden's cob oven. Current improvements include the garden's irrigation system and an expansion of the pumpkin patch – a popular attraction in the fall. Existing garden beds have currently been taken, but more are planned soon. The cost is \$15 for a 5 by 10-foot bed or \$25 for a 5 by 20-foot one. Volunteers of all ages are always welcome. The John Day Community Garden is located on the Third Street Extension, just east and across the road from the Grant County Fairgrounds rodeo arena. Anyone interested in renting a plot, or businesses that would like to sponsor one, should call 541-620-0719 or email johnday-communitygarden@gmail.com.

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