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spotted fever rickettsiosis, Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI), Heartland virus, and babesiosis, among others.

In Lyme disease, a characteristic bulls-eye rash may accompany flu-like symptoms. If not treated, Lyme disease can spread to the heart, nervous system, and joints.

Spotted fevers, including Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF), are bacterial diseases that can be transmitted by infected American dog ticks. Symptoms may include fever, abdominal pain, headache, muscle pain, and vomiting. In some cases, a rash may also develop. If not treated within the first few days of symptoms, RMSF can be severe and even fatal.

STARI produces flu-like symptoms - headache, fever, fatigue, and joint pain - as well as a rash similar to

that of Lyme disease. However, STARI has not been linked to chronic joint, neurological, or cardiac symptoms as seen with Lyme disease. This disease is mostly found in areas where the lone star tick is common.

The lone star tick is also known for passing a sugar molecule that can induce the alphagal red meat allergy. This allergy may appear as an anaphylactic reaction such as swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat, dizziness, and shortness of breath or as a skin rash that occurs between three to six hours after eating beef, lamb, or pork.

"When ticks bite you, if you don't find them, they can stay attached for 7 to 10 days to reach full engorgement," Larson said. "During this time, they may transmit a pathogen to you. The transmission usually occurs 12 to 48 hours later,

depending on the pathogen. So, you have time to get a tick off of you before you become infected. If you notice any rashes, fever, or pain after a tick bite, consult with your physician and ask them for help. Many of the diseases can be treated, if caught early, by a round of antibiotics."

Although it is now the season to go outside and enjoy the fresh air, it is also imperative to make sure that tick protection is practiced. Prevention remains the most effective method in protecting yourself, your children, and others, including your pets, from ticks.

"Ticks can be avoided through a few methods," Larson said. "One is to wear long sleeves and pants when outside and to tuck your pant legs into your socks, cutting off one of



Deer ticks, or blacklegged ticks, are known to transmit Lyme disease. PHOTO/Credit/CDC

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