



Columbiana County Health District

P.O. Box 309 – 7360 State Route 45 – Lisbon, Ohio 44432
Phone: 330-424-0272 – **General Fax:** 330-424-1733 – **Nursing Fax:** 330-424-1843
Email: cchd@columbiana-health.org **Web:** www.columbiana-health.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Powassan Virus Disease Detected in Columbiana County

LISBON- The laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has now confirmed that the first case of Powassan Virus Disease (POW) in Ohio has been detected in Columbiana County. A resident of the Lisbon area was suspected to have POW and has been hospitalized since being admitted to Akron Children’s Hospital in October. Healthcare providers, local health departments, and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) have worked in partnership to confirm this rare diagnosis. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 100 cases of POW were reported in the United States during the past 10 years. The ODH Zoonotic Disease Program plans to conduct surveillance in Columbiana County for ticks that may carry this virus in the coming weeks.

POW is a tickborne illness that cannot directly be transmitted from person-to-person. In Ohio, the virus may be transmitted to people most commonly by the blacklegged tick. Blacklegged or “deer” ticks remain active as long as the temperature is above freezing and the ground is not frozen or covered with snow. Symptoms of POW range greatly in severity from asymptomatic to life-threatening neurological disorders. These symptoms could include headache, fever, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties seizures and death. Illness onset from the time of the tick bite can range from one week to one month. There is currently not an approved treatment or vaccine for POW. You can find additional information about POW [here](#).



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Here are some tips to avoid tick bites and Be Tick Smart!:

- Walk in the middle of trails. Avoid tall grass, brush and leaf litter.
- Use EPA-registered repellents labelled for use against ticks on skin. Always follow the label instructions. EPA-registered repellents are safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Treat clothing and gear such as pants, boots, socks and tents with a product containing permethrin, or buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Do not apply permethrin directly to skin.
- Wear long pants, long sleeves and long socks; tuck pants legs into socks.
- Wear light colors to make it easier to see ticks.

Check yourself, your children, and pets thoroughly for ticks after spending time in areas that may contain ticks. If you find a tick attached to the body, here are some tips for safely removing them:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull the tick away from your skin with steady, even pressure.
- Do not twist or jerk the tick, which can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouthparts easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or any other “folk” remedies to remove a tick, as these methods do not work.
- Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- Wash your hands and the bite area with soap and water.



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If you are concerned that you or a family member may have a tickborne illness including POW, consult your health care provider. Additional information and resources are available on the ODH website at Ohio.gov/tick.

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