Bug off: Avoid tickborne diseases with these savvy strategies

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following tips to help families avoid tickborne diseases:

- Avoid tick-infested areas — typically wooded or high grass areas. Ticks also can be found in leaves, brush and tall grass in backyards.
- Wear closed-toe shoes, a hat, long sleeves and long pants tucked into socks. Put long hair up.
- Products with permethrin can be sprayed on clothing.
- Use insect repellant with no more than 30% DEET on the skin (for children 2 months and older), and reapply every one to two hours. Wash off after returning indoors.
- After possible tick exposure, examine the child, especially along the hairline and behind the ears.
- If a tick is found, remove it immediately with tweezers or fingers protected by a tissue. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull it straight out. (Avoid folklore remedies such as petroleum jelly, gasoline or hot matches.)
- Flush the tick down a toilet or dispose of it in a bottle filled with rubbing alcohol.
- Wash hands after removing a tick.
- Seek medical care if a rash or suspicious symptoms appear after being exposed to a tick.

— Lori O’Keefe