Tick-borne Diseases

Which tickborne diseases could I acquire in Oregon?

Lyme disease
(Borrelia burgdorferi) transmitted by the black-legged tick (Ixodes scapularis)
- Human granulocytic ehrlichiosis (HGE) also known as anaplasmosis, transmitted by the black-legged tick (Ixodes scapularis)
- Babesiosis (Babesia microti, a protozoan) transmitted by the black-legged tick (Ixodes scapularis)

Where can these be acquired?
These diseases can be acquired in areas endemic to ticks. The black-legged tick is found in wooded or brushy areas, on the edge of hiking or animal trails, or the edge of a lawn where it meets a wooded or brushy area.

What signs and symptoms should prompt someone to see their healthcare provider?

Lyme disease: Early onset: bull’s-eye rash, fever, malaise, fatigue, headache, muscle ache, and joint aches. Late onset: multiple rash lesions, facial paralysis (Bell’s palsy), chronic arthritis, joint swelling, numbness in extremities.
HGE: Symptoms may include fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, joint pain, and confusion.
Babesiosis: Symptoms may include fever, chills, sweating, muscle aches, and fatigue.

What precautions should park visitors take?
Avoid possible tick habitats during the peak time of year, late March – mid-October.
- Wear tick repellent that contains permethrin or DEET.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and closed-toed shoes and tuck pant legs into top of socks or boots.
- Wear light-colored clothes to make it easier to spot ticks.
- Check for ticks frequently and remove them promptly.

What are symptoms and treatments in animals?
Lyme disease: some dogs have no appetite, lameness, joint swelling, and arthritis, while others show no symptoms of disease. There is a vaccine available. Antibiotics are used to treat infection. Cats usually do not become ill.
HGE: Horses and dogs may develop Ehrlichiosis. In the first two to four weeks of acute infection, the animal may develop a fever, lose weight, and be depressed. Antibiotic therapy usually results in rapid improvement.
Babesiosis: No babesiosis-infected cats have been reported in the United States. Most dogs do not show symptoms to this disease but they may have a slight fever, be lethargic and anemic.

Oregon Public Health Division
http://oregon.gov/oha/ph