

## Tick Collection and Testing Information Sheet

1. For best results, attempt to remove the tick intact. Usually you can pull the tick out straight with a pair of tweezers. **Do not put the tick into formalin or alcohol.** If the tick is damaged or is too dry, it cannot be tested.
2. After removing the tick, place it in the provided container or a Ziplock bag with a paper towel or cotton ball moistened with water. Keeping the tick moist will keep the tick from drying out. **Please label the container.**
3. Required information for the tick to be tested includes the customer's name, date of birth, gender, phone number, mailing address, the date and time the tick was removed and the geographic location where it was acquired.
4. There is no charge by PHB Laboratory for identification of the tick species. Only the species *Ixodes pacificus* carries the bacteria that causes Lyme disease in this area.
5. There is a charge of \$40 to have the tick tested for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. **Tick testing is not covered by insurance or Medi-Cal.** Please make checks payable to H.C.P.H.
6. All reports (positive or negative) are mailed. Clients with positive tick reports will also be phoned.

### Interpretation of Results

The fluorescent antibody test performed is specific for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. A positive result from this test indicates that the tick carries the Lyme disease bacteria, *B. burgdorferi*. It does not necessarily mean that the bacteria have infected the bitten person. Studies have shown that, among other factors, the possibility of infection with *B. burgdorferi* increases with the amount of time the tick has been attached to the person. The development of Lyme disease varies greatly.

**Anyone bitten by a tick carrying *Borrelia burgdorferi* should always consult with his or her health care provider.**

A non-reactive test for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, indicates that the tick tested did not harbor *Borrelia burgdorferi*, within the limits of the fluorescent antibody test. A negative test does not mean that the person is not infected by *Borrelia burgdorferi*; the person may have been bitten by another tick, or may have been bitten at another time. Ticks can cause many diseases other than Lyme disease.

**People bitten by ticks who become sick in any way should contact their health care provider.**

If you have medical questions you may also contact Humboldt County Public Health at 707-445-6200 or visit [www.cdc.gov/ticks](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks).

