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THEME : 3 A Immune system
Série S/L/ES

Sujet n°3

Another Tick-Borne Disease to Guard Against

Despite its many delights, summer also brings its fair share of pestilence. One, called Babesiosis (...) could eventually rival Lyme disease as the most common tick-borne ailment* in the United States.

5 (...) Babesiosis is caused by protozoans (single celled organisms) that invade red blood cells and can cause a malaria-like illness. The disease has an interesting history, recently recounted in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (...) Babesiosis is named for Dr. Victor Babes, a Romanian pathologist who in 1888 identified the disease in cattle that had fever and blood-tainted urine. (...) The first human case was not recognized until 1957.

10 (...) Babesiosis is spreading slowly through the Northeast and Upper Midwest, where it is increasingly recognized as the cause of a flu-like summer ailment. (...) Babesia protozoans are transmitted to humans by ticks, which acquire the infection from the white-footed mouse and white-tailed deer. And, yes, the same tick — *Ixodes scapularis* (or deer tick) — transmits both Lyme disease and babesiosis (...)

15 The deer tick (...) requires a blood meal at every one of its developmental stages. With its hind legs clutching grass or a leaf, the tick sits patiently (...) ready to latch onto* an unsuspecting mammal that happens by. In spring or summer, that mammal could be you. In the fall, the adult tick feeds on white-tailed deer, which don't get sick. This feeding allows female ticks to produce a profusion of eggs for the next generation. (...)

20 Underreporting of babesiosis is expected to continue for a long time. People with only mild symptoms are unlikely to see a doctor, and without a tell-tale sign like the bull's-eye rash of Lyme or a simple blood test for the infection, most doctors are unlikely to diagnose babesiosis correctly, Dr. Krause said. One-quarter of infected adults and half of infected children were free of symptoms, his study found. Yet if they donated blood, they could transmit the infection to others, with potentially dire consequences. There is no widely used test to screen blood donors for infection with Babesia. Likewise, an infected woman could transmit the protozoans to her child during pregnancy
25 or delivery. The risk of a severe and possibly fatal infection is highest in newborns, adults over 50 and anyone with compromised immunity, including people with cancer, H.I.V. or a transplanted organ.

By JANE E. BRODY,
The New York Times, July 30, 2012

tick-borne ailment: maladie portée par les tiques

to latch onto : s'attacher à

Sum up this article and explain the main ideas using your scientific knowledge