



## POWASSAN VIRUS DISEASE (POW) FACT SHEET

### WHAT IS POW?

Powassan (POW) virus disease is a rare, but often serious disease that is caused by a virus spread by infected ticks. Most cases in the United States have occurred in the Northeast and Great Lakes region. POW virus can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).

### HOW DO YOU GET POW?

POW virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected tick. POW virus is not transmitted directly from person-to-person.

### SYMPTOMS

- Many people infected with POW virus do not have any symptoms
- Symptoms usually appear 1 week to 1 month after exposure to an infected tick
- Symptoms may include fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, and seizures

### TREATMENT

There are no medications to treat POW virus infection. Treatment may include respiratory support, intravenous fluids, and medications to reduce swelling in the brain. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

### PREVENTION

Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against Powassan virus disease:

- Walk on cleared trails
- Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt to minimize the amount of exposed skin
- Wear light colored clothing to make it easier to see and remove ticks

**TREAT** clothing or skin with repellents.

**INSPECT** yourself, clothing and gear for ticks.

**CLEAN** & disinfect any area where a tick was removed.

**KEEP** record of the date the tick was removed.

**SHOWER** as soon as possible after coming indoors.

### DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.