Erie County Department of Health

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

TICKS & LYME DISEASE

TICK FACTS

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection which is spread by a bite from an infected blacklegged tick which is also known as a deer tick.

Not all deer ticks are infected by the Lyme disease spirochete bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

Lyme disease is the most prevalent tick-borne disease in New York State and is prevalent in the Northeast and Great Lakes region.

Infected deer ticks can be found throughout New York State.

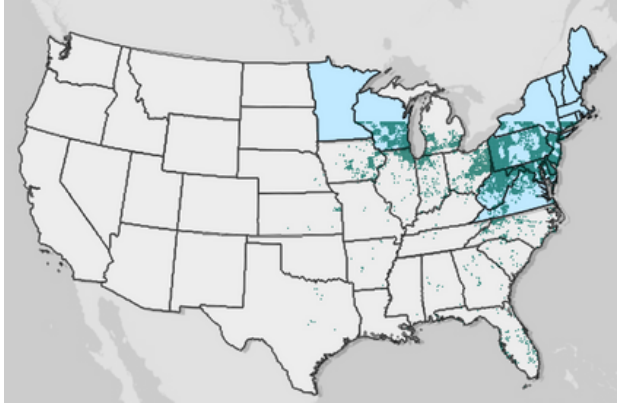
Ticks are most active any time the temperature is above 45° F. Young deer ticks, called nymphs, are active from mid-May to mid-August and are about the size of poppy seeds. Adult ticks are most active from March to mid-May and from mid-August to November and are about the size of sesame seeds. Both nymphs and adults can spread Lyme disease.

Usually, infected ticks have to be attached to you or your pet for 36-48 hours in order to transmit the bacterium into the bloodstream. Remove ticks within 24 hours to reduce the risk of Lyme disease.

When you've spent time in high risk areas where the grasses are high, or in lawns and gardens, especially at the edges of woods and around old stone walls, always check for attached ticks. Don't panic, carefully remove them.

Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue and rash at the tick bite site. This rash can be faint, have different colors and shapes, including a "bulls-eye" shape, and can expand over several days. Scan QR code for images.

Patients treated with antibiotics in the early stage of the infection usually recover rapidly and completely. If left untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.



CDC, reported cases of Lyme disease, 2020

Division of Environmental Health
Rabies, Disease & Vector Control Program
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FIGHT TICKS ONE YARD AT A TIME

When you are in areas that are likely tick habitats, **walk in the center of paths or trails** to avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter at trail edges.

Use insect repellent. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions. You can treat clothes (especially pants, socks, shoes) with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact, or buy clothes that are pretreated. Permethrin can also be used on tents and some camping gear. Do not use permethrin directly on skin. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when applying repellent.

Perform daily tick checks. Always check for ticks after being outdoors, even in your own yard.

Bathe or shower. Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within 2 hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.

Ticks can get a ride indoors on your clothes. and on pets. After being outdoors, **tumble dry clothing in a hot dryer** for 10 minutes to kill any ticks that are attached to clothing.

Stay on the beaten path and **keep pets out of brush.** They can be infected and also bring ticks to your house and family.

TO REMOVE A TICK FROM SKIN

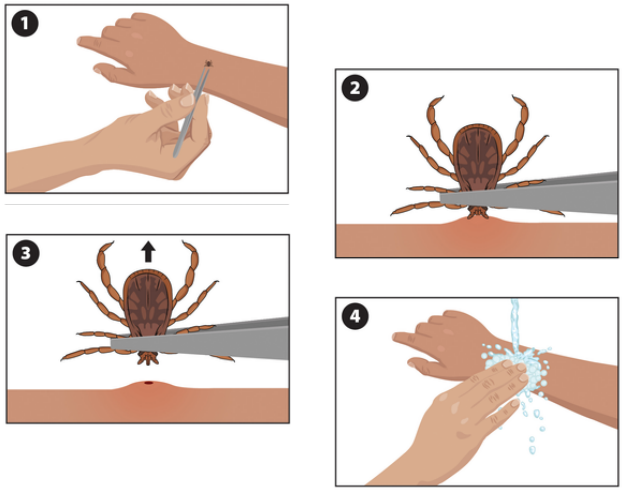
1. Use a pair of pointed tweezers to grasp the tick by its head or mouth parts right where they enter the skin. DO NOT grasp the tick by its body.

2. Pull firmly and steadily outward.
DO NOT jerk or twist the tick.

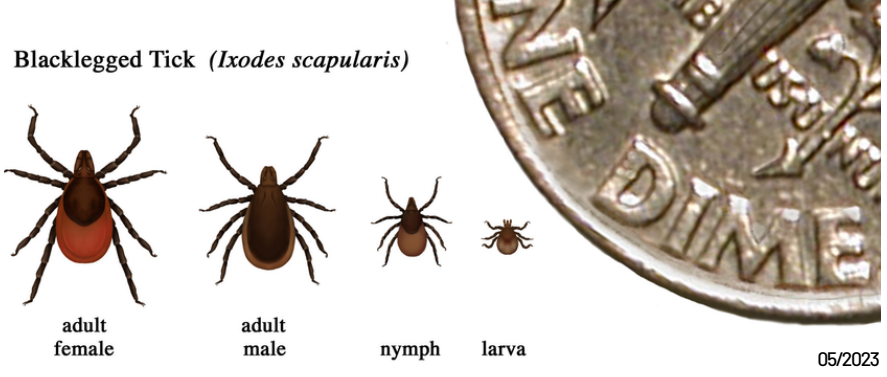
3. Place the tick in a small container of rubbing alcohol to kill it & for possible identification if your doctor or veterinarian orders the tick to be evaluated for Lyme disease risk.

4. Clean bite wound with rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

Monitor the site of the tick bite for the next 30 days for the appearance of a rash. Use this advice for removing ticks from pets, too!



Even if you don't remember being bitten by a tick, an unexpected summer fever or odd rash may be the first signs of Lyme disease, particularly if you've been in tick habitat. See your healthcare provider if you have symptoms.



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