

Only blacklegged ticks/ deer ticks carry Lyme disease

High risk, high tick areas:

- Long Point Provincial Park
- Rondeau Provincial Park
- Turkey Point Provincial Park
- Point Pelee National Park
- Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area
- St. Lawrence Islands National Park
- Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area

Tick Identification

Dog Tick



Female



Male



Engorged

Blacklegged Tick



Female



Male



Engorged

This information is intended to provide general health-related information about Lyme disease.

It is not intended to replace medical consultation by your physician and/or other health care professionals.

Sources:

Red Book, 2009.

28th Edition, American Academy of Pediatrics.

Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 19th Edition, David L. Heymann.

MOHLTC, www.health.gov.on.ca (Lyme disease page) 2010

Images Courtesy of R. Lindsay, Public Health Agency of Canada

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Ticks and Lyme Disease



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What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection that is caused by a bite from a blacklegged tick infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. Blacklegged ticks are very small and can range in size from a poppy seed to a small grape (when engorged). They are found on the ground, in tall grass and bushes, and they attach themselves to animals and humans passing by. The risk of getting bitten by a tick is greatest from spring to fall, but ticks can be present during mild winters.

What should I do if I spot a tick on my skin?



1. With fine tip tweezers, grasp the tick's head as close to the skin as possible



2. Slowly pull the tick away from the skin until it releases. Do not twist or crush the tick. Ensure all the mouth parts of have been removed, otherwise the bite can become infected



3. After removing the tick, wash the area with soap and water

Check your body thoroughly, including the groin area, armpits and hairline. It's not unusual to have more than one tick attached. Tick bites are usually painless, so they may go unnoticed.

If you think the tick is blacklegged or if you cannot identify the tick, it can be submitted to Niagara Region Public Health for testing.

- All ticks must be submitted in clear, dry containers or double Ziploc bags
- In cases where blacklegged ticks are identified, the tick will be tested for the bacteria that cause Lyme disease

There is no cost for tick identification and testing.

How do I prevent a tick bite?

1. Wear light coloured clothing to help spot ticks
2. Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Icaridin. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions
3. Do daily full body checks on yourself, your children and pets after coming in from the outdoors
4. Cut your grass and dispose of leaf litter where ticks can live
5. Outdoor workers should shower or bath within two hours of being in forested or long grass areas

How is Lyme disease spread?

Not all blacklegged ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Ticks get the bacteria from feeding on infected mice, chipmunks, and birds. Cats and dogs can get Lyme disease, but cannot spread it to humans. Pets can carry infected ticks into your home so check your pets regularly. Lyme disease is not spread from person to person.



What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

Early symptoms of Lyme disease usually occur within one to two weeks, but can occur as soon as three days or as long as a month after a tick bite. If you develop: fever, headache, muscle and joint pains, fatigue and a skin rash, especially one that looks like a red bull's eye, promptly seek medical advice.

Is there treatment?

Medical attention should be sought if symptoms develop within 30 days of removal of the tick. It is important to tell your health care provider when you were bitten and where the tick came from. Remember, not all ticks carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. Also, a tick that is infected with the bacteria must be attached for at least 24 hours to transmit Lyme disease. This means that having a tick bite does not necessarily mean that antibiotics are needed. All treatment decisions should be made with your health care provider.