

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection you get from the bite of an infected DEER tick.

Lyme disease may cause symptoms affecting the skin, nervous system, heart and/or joints of an individual.



How is Lyme disease transmitted?

NOT all deer ticks are infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. Ticks can become infected if they feed on small animals that are infected. The disease can be spread when an infected tick bites a person and stays attached for a period of time.

When do most people get Lyme disease?

Most cases of Lyme disease occur during the late spring, early summer months when the nymphal stage deer tick is active. This tick is the size of a sesame or poppy seed.

Where will I find ticks?

Ticks are everywhere there is grass, especially around your home. They live close to the ground and crawl up on grass or bushes and hang, waiting for a ride to a blood meal.

They are usually found at the edges of woods and lawns, on shrubs and bushes, in leaf litter, near stone walls and woodpiles.

What can I do to protect myself from getting Lyme disease?

The main thing you can do, to protect yourself, is a **daily tick check**, especially on children. Ticks need to be attached longer than 24 to 36 hours to pass on the disease, if they are infected. The best time to check is after a bath or shower, feeling the skin for a tiny, scab like bump. A full body check is recommended including, the scalp, around the hairline and ears, neck, chest, armpits, waistband area, groin, behind the knee and between toes. Also check pets thoroughly when they come in from outdoors. Pets may have ticks feeding, which can fall off outdoors and lay eggs. They may also have ticks crawling on their fur which can then attach to our skin.

Also, when going outdoors wear protective clothing. Wear shoes and socks; ticks live close to the ground. Wear light colors to see ticks if they are crawling. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts, if it's not too hot, and tuck pants into socks and shirt into pants. Wear a hat to protect the hair and if you have long hair, tie it up and put it under the hat.

Wear repellents containing deet when outdoors. Follow the directions carefully. Do not spray aerosols indoors. Apply only to exposed skin and wash off when returning indoors. Try not to apply repellents to face and hands. Sweat can cause the repellents to run into eyes, or mouth and hands or fingers can find their way into the mouth.

When walking in wooded or grassy areas, stay in the middle of the pathway. Avoid high-risk areas such as the edges of wood and tall grass fields. Moist, shaded areas may also be risk areas.

Keep the area around your property clear. Remove leaf litter and brush as far away from your house as possible. Prune low lying bushes to let in more sunlight, and rake up any leaves in areas where you or children spend time. This should be done every fall because ticks prefer to live during the winter under leaf-litter.

Information provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention



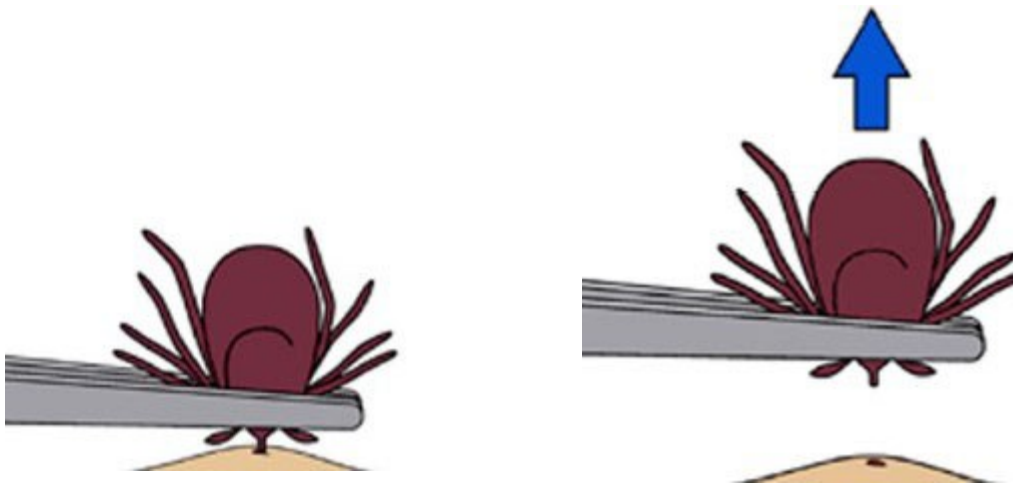
Steven M. Neuhaus **County Executive**
Eli N. Avila, MD, JD, MPH, FCLM **Commissioner of Health**

Removing a Tick

I found a tick on me, now what do I do?

The first thing to remember is don't panic. If you've been doing tick checks every day you have a good idea how long the tick has been attached. The tick needs to be removed. Prompt and proper removal will help reduce the risk of infection.

- Use fine pointed tweezers or forceps
- Grasp the tick's mouthparts close to the skin and steadily pull upward and outward
- Do not panic if the mouthpart breaks off. The mouthparts alone cannot transmit Lyme disease because the infective body of the tick is no longer attached. However, to prevent secondary infection, remove the mouthparts as you would a splinter. Do not squeeze the body of the tick. This may force infection into the site.
- Do not apply substances such as Vaseline, nailpolish remover, repellents, soaps or heat to the tick while it is still attached. These materials might agitate the tick and cause it to regurgitate infective fluid into the site.
- After removal wash your hands and apply antiseptic to the site.
- The area around the bite site may become immediately red. This is NOT the bull's eye rash, this is an allergic reaction to the bite, which is normal, and should go away in a couple of days.



Information and pictures provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.