

DARE TO ACT

Preventing Lyme & Other Diseases From Ticks

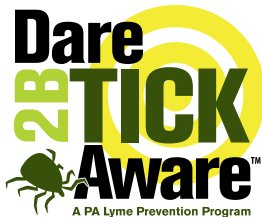


Lyme disease is the fastest growing tick-borne disease in the country and Pennsylvania has more cases each year than any other state. Act 83 passed into law in 2014 establishing tick-borne disease as "a serious threat to the health and quality of life of many residents and visitors of Pennsylvania."

Any tick bite can increase your risk of getting sick and should be taken seriously. Take action to protect yourself and prevent potential diseases that ticks carry.

Do You Know What to Do if a Tick Bites YOU?

- Do you know how to check for ticks?
- Do you know what to do if you find a tick on you?
- What should you do with the tick once removed?
- What symptoms should you look for in upcoming days, weeks, months?
- What do you do if you have symptoms?



A PA Lyme Prevention Program

I don't go for walks in the woods. Why do I need to check myself, children and pets for ticks?

IF YOU ONLY TAKE ONE PREVENTATIVE STEP, take a shower within 2 hours of exposure and check for ticks.



Any time you venture outside in areas where ticks are common, there is a risk of tick and disease exposure. Ticks are in surprising places – on the way to your mailbox, in city parks, at the edge of the highway, embedded in wooden park picnic benches and in your own backyard.



When you do come in from being outdoors, follow this easy routine to ensure that ticks don't come in with you.

- **Remove clothes** – remove clothes immediately, preferably in the garage, leaving shoes in the garage or outside.
- **Run clothes in dryer** – HIGH HEAT for minimum of 10 minutes. Per the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), high heat kills ticks that may be clinging to your clothing.
- **NOTE:** washing clothing first will not kill ticks, nor will they drown or die from the hot water.
- **Shower** – within 2 hours of potential exposure.
- Showering immediately will help wash off any loose ticks, especially in your hair. Once attached, ticks do not wash off in the shower.
- **Tick check** – and check again! Do a thorough tick check while in the shower and afterwards to ensure you are tick-free.

REMEMBER YOUR TICK CHECKS!

Doing routine tick checks is critical to finding ticks before they attach. Check your children and pets too! If a tick is already attached, the sooner you remove it, the less risk of disease transmission.



Learn to do a tick check with the Tick Check Challenge!
www.palyme.org/tick-check-challenge/

Key places to check:

- In-between toes
- Behind the knee
- In/behind ears
- Groin area
- Belly button
- Armpits
- Neck
- Scalp and hair
- Under skin folds
- Underneath watch bands and bra straps

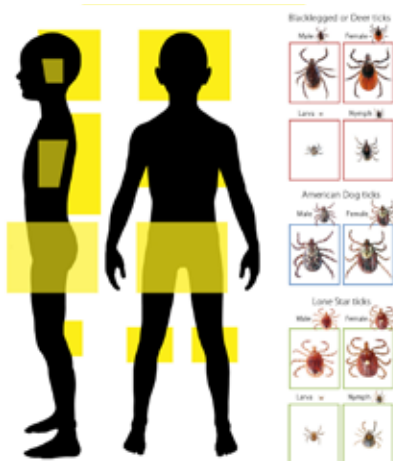


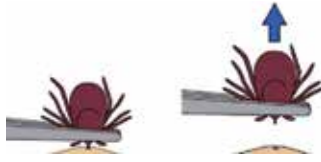
Photo courtesy of The University of Rhode Island TickEncounter Resource Center

TIP: Hang a "shower card" (see tickencounter.org) in shower or on bathroom mirror for tick check reminder.

Touch all freckles, moles and bumps and run fingers through hair to ensure there are no ticks. Remember - Nymph ticks can be as small as a grain of sand or a poppy seed.

PROPER STEPS FOR TICK REMOVAL:

STEP 1: Use pointed tweezers, or other effective tick removers, to grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Put on latex gloves to protect any open cuts on your skin.



STEP 2: Slowly and steadily pull straight up with steady, even pressure.

STEP 3: After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite area, the tweezers and your hands. Use rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub or germicidal soap and water.

TIP: WHEN REMOVING A TICK DO NOT... squeeze or squish the tick, do not twist or jerk tick, "paint" the tick with petroleum jelly, rubbing alcohol or any essential oil; do not use heat or burn the tick out with a match. **Doing any of these may cause the tick to throw up its stomach contents, including bacteria and other disease, into your blood stream.**

STEP 4: Save the detached tick by placing it in a sealed bag with a moist cotton ball (if sending for testing). Never crush a tick with your fingers or flush it down the toilet. NOTE: tick testing labs may have specific instructions for storing and mailing in the tick to be tested (see more detailed information in Step 5.)



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STEP 5: Once removed, consider sending the tick for testing to assess infection risk. **Since ticks can carry multiple infections**, a tick test can help your doctor determine appropriate treatment. If you experience symptoms, do not rely on just the tick testing and consult your doctor immediately.

- PA resident? **Ticklab.org*** - Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania offers a FREE basic panel to PA residents; more detailed tests can be done for a fee. (all panels require a fee for non-PA residents)
- **Tickcheck.com*** (cost based on panel selected, non-PA residents) – TickCheck, LLC offers the same testing panels as Ticklab.org, but all at your expense.

Or identify the tick yourself:

- TickEncounter: www.tickencounter.org/tick_identification
- Tick Check: www.tickcheck.com/info/tick-identification
- PA Lyme Tick ID card: www.palyme.org/dare-materials lists what diseases the ticks may carry

**Ticklab.org and Tickcheck.com are East Stroudsburg University affiliated labs dedicated to providing fast, highly rated, laboratory-quality tick testing to people nationwide for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.*



STEP 6: If you find an attached tick on you, there is exposure risk. Contact your doctor immediately if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms. Taking antibiotics as a preventive after a tick bite may be beneficial for some people. This can be helpful in Pennsylvania where Lyme disease is common. It is even more important if the tick is engorged or has been feeding for a while. Discuss treatment risks and benefits with your health care practitioner. Evaluate your situation along with the risks and benefits carefully. Treating Lyme disease earlier is well known to have better outcomes.



Bull's Eye Rash



Fever



Bell's Palsy



Muscle Aches

TICK BEHAVIOR DID YOU KNOW?

- It takes a tick a few hours to find a suitable spot to attach and about 15 minutes to 2 hours to physically attach to your skin.
- You may not feel a tick for two reasons—they are very small and they inject a painkiller at the site of bite/attachment that numbs the skin.
- Ticks feed on blood. Photo: engorged (filled up with blood (right), and a tick that is not engorged (left).
- The engorged tick has been attached for many hours. Find and remove ticks before they attach and become engorged with your blood.



I FOUND A TICK ON ME! WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Remove the tick correctly! **DO NOT WAIT** for the tick to detach on its own. Remove it immediately.

Effective and studied tick removal devices include pointed tweezers, The ProTick Remedy™, TickCard, etc. Always verify effectiveness of tick tool with manufacturers before using them to remove both nymphs and adult ticks.

ACT QUICKLY!

Removing a tick as soon as you find it reduces your chance of getting sick from a disease the tick may be carrying. Most people have no idea how long a tick is attached. Some diseases can be transmitted faster than others. Remember, ticks found and removed quickly are less risky than the ticks you don't look for, find or remove.

Note that not everyone gets a bulls-eye rash. If you do see a bulls-eye rash – that means you do have Lyme and should be treated. Other early symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, Bell's palsy (facial drooping), swollen joints, or flu-like symptoms (chills, sweats, nausea, muscle aches). Be especially wary of any "summer" flu symptoms.

TICK TESTING IN PA

Why test the tick?
Tick testing is more accurate than human testing. Human tests look for antibodies produced to fight infection. Tick testing looks for the presence of the bacteria itself using a PCR test that detects specific DNA sequences of the bacteria or pathogen.

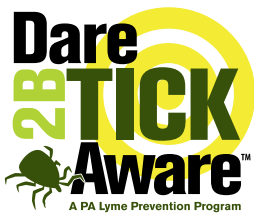
Ticklab.org	
Test type	PCR/DNA
Accuracy	99.9%
Timeframe	Within 3 business days of lab receipt guarantee
Diseases	
Lyme disease	X
Anaplasmosis	X
Babesiosis	X
Bartonellosis	X
B. miyamotoi	X
Ehrlichiosis	X
Powassan Virus	X
Rocky Mountain spotted fever	X
STARI	X
Tularemia	X

SUPPORT TICK TESTING RESEARCH

If you found an unattached tick on yourself or pet and want to support research, send the tick to Drexel University College of Medicine, Center for Advanced Microbial Processing - email ticks@drexel.edu for a submission form. This is free. Note this lab will not send you a report on the tick type or infections.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health advises:

- If the tick tests positive for disease-causing organisms, it does not necessarily mean that the bitten individual has been infected.
- If the bitten individual has been infected, they are likely to develop symptoms before results of the tick test are available. Patients with symptoms should not wait for tick testing results before beginning treatment.
- Negative results can lead to false assurance. For example, the individual may have been unknowingly bitten by a different tick that was infected.



To learn more about prevention measures,
visit our website or social media pages.

www.palyme.org

 PA Lyme Resource Network

 @PALyme1

PA Lyme Resource Network (www.palyme.org) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides awareness, education, support, advocacy and resources to navigate Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases in the state of Pennsylvania.

The Dare 2B Tick Aware Program™ was originally funded in 2017 by a PA Department of Health CDC Preventative Health Block Grant.

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