



Beware of Ticks

Q & A on Tickborne Diseases

What diseases can people get from ticks?

In the United States, several types of ticks carry bacteria and viruses that can cause human disease. In Allegheny County, the most common tickborne disease is Lyme disease, which is transmitted by the deer tick, also known as the blacklegged tick. Hundreds of cases of Lyme disease are reported to the Health Department every year from all areas of the county.



Learn more about other, less-common tickborne diseases at <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/>.

How do ticks transmit disease?

Ticks become infected with bacteria that causes Lyme disease by feeding on mice and other small animals. Later they may feed on a human and transmit the bacteria if attached for more than 24 hours, then drop off. If you are bitten by a tick, the best way to reduce the chance of catching a tickborne disease is to remove the tick within the first 24 hours. Most people do not realize that they have been bitten because ticks are very small.



Learn more about life cycles and hosts at https://www.cdc.org/ticks/life_cycle_and_hosts.html.

What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

The first symptom is usually a “bull’s eye” rash that may appear 3-30 days after a tick bite. Most infected persons, 70-80%, will develop this type of rash. Other symptoms may include fever, headache, joint or muscle aches and fatigue. Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics if it is identified early; if not treated early, complications such as chronic joint pain, headaches or other neurologic symptoms may develop.

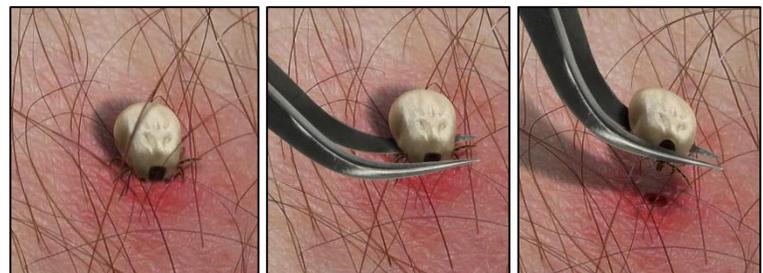


Learn more about the symptoms at https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/signs_symptoms/index.html.

What should you do if you are bitten by a tick?

After outdoor activities, always check your and your children’s exposed areas for ticks.

Remove the tick as soon as possible. The likelihood of contracting a tickborne illness increases the longer the tick is attached. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick at the surface of the skin and pull upward. If mouthparts remain in the skin, remove them with the tweezers. Then, thoroughly wash the bite area with soap and water. Call your health care provider to discuss whether treatment is necessary.



Learn more about removing a tick at https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html.

How can people prevent tick bites?

Ticks are most active in warmer months (April through October), but can emerge year-round. Prevention measures include avoiding bare skin contact with wooded and brushy areas, using repellants with DEET for skin or Permethrin for clothing, showering as soon as possible after coming indoors, and finding and removing ticks from skin as soon as possible.

Learn more about avoiding ticks at https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html.



How can pets avoid tick bites?

Dogs are especially at high risk for tick bites. It is important to check pets daily for ticks and remove them right away. Ask your veterinarian about tick prevention products. A Lyme disease vaccination is available for dogs.

Learn more about how your pets can avoid ticks at https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_pets.html.



How can I keep ticks out of my yard?

Tick pesticides can be used to reduce the number of ticks in the yard, but are unlikely to eliminate them so personal protection measures are needed as well. You can use simple techniques to reduce the number of ticks – remove dead leaves, clear brush, mow the lawn frequently and create tick migration barriers with wood chips or gravel around recreational areas. Efforts to reduce the number of wild animals entering the yard will also reduce the number of ticks. Fencing and repellent will exclude deer that carry ticks. To reduce the population of wild mice which harbor Lyme disease, prune low growing vegetation, stack wood neatly and use a rodenticide in tamper-proof bait stations.

Learn more about keeping ticks away at https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/in_the_yard.html.

