

Tick-Borne Disease Prevention



Ticks can spread disease

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures that can transmit disease to humans through their bite. Because they are so small - ranging in size from a grain of sand to an apple seed - their bites are painless and often go unnoticed.

New York State has some of the highest numbers of tick-borne diseases reported in the U.S. From 2004 to 2016, these numbers totaled 69,313, second only to Pennsylvania with 73,610.*

To curb these numbers, New York State launched a [statewide Lyme and tick-borne disease control plan](#) that includes:

- Expansion of tick control methods on public lands;
- Increased education aimed at hikers, hunters and others at high risk;
- A charge to the NYS Department of Health to pursue research partnerships to develop better diagnostic tests;
- A summit to advance the necessary research on Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses.



Deer ticks in different developmental stages next to a dime to show size.



Typical bull's-eye rash that is common with Lyme Disease.

Common Tick-borne Diseases in Westchester County

Lyme Disease

Lyme Disease is a potentially serious disease passed on to people and domestic animals through the bite of an infected deer tick.

Symptoms can include:

- Red bull's-eye shaped rash
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Sleeping difficulties
- Joint and muscle pain
- Swollen glands
- Dizziness

Anaplasmosis/Ehrlichiosis

Like Lyme Disease, Anaplasmosis/Ehrlichiosis is spread through the bite of an infected deer tick and dual infection with both Anaplasmosis/Ehrlichiosis and Lyme Disease is possible.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle and joint pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weight loss
- Low platelet count
- Low white blood cell count

Babesiosis

Babesiosis is a third tick-borne disease that is found in our area. Like the others, babesiosis is spread through the bite of an infected deer tick.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Sweats
- Headache
- Body aches
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Hemolytic anemia

*Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention

Tick-borne disease diagnosis and treatment

Physicians diagnose tick-borne diseases through physical examination and the patient's history of symptoms. Blood tests may also be used to help confirm the diagnosis. Antibiotics given during the early stages of infection generally result in a full recovery with no long-term complications. The longer a tick is attached to your skin the greater the potential risk of disease transmission. Usually, a tick must be attached to your skin for at least 48-72 hours to transmit infection, but in some diseases such as Powassan it is likely shorter than 12-24 hours. For more information, speak with your health care provider.

How to remove a tick

- Use a pair of clean, fine-point tweezers and grasp the tick at the place of attachment (by the head or mouthparts), as close to the skin as possible. Do not grasp the tick by the body.
- Pull the tick firmly and steadily outward. DO NOT twist the tick.
- Place the tick in a small vial or container with rubbing alcohol or vegetable oil to kill it.
- Clean the bite with disinfectant.
- DO NOT put petroleum jelly, a hot match, alcohol or any other irritant on the tick before removing it. This can increase the chances of an infected tick transmitting bacteria to you.
- Monitor the site of the bite for the next 30 days for the appearance of a rash, and report any other early signs of tick-borne disease like fever, chills, headache, fatigue and muscle aches to your health care provider as well.

[View a video on how to safely remove a tick](#)

How to prevent tick bites

- Avoid tick-infested areas (wooded or grassy areas), especially during the spring and summer months.
- Wear light-colored, tightly-woven clothes to spot ticks more easily.
- Wear pants, a long sleeved shirt, socks and shoes when enjoying outdoor activities. Tuck your pants into your socks and your shirt into your pants to create a barrier between ticks and your skin.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET and permethrin according to label instructions when spending time outdoors in grassy or wooded areas.
- Do tick checks after outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking or picnicking, but at least once a day. Inspect the entire body (parents should check their children) and remove ticks promptly.

[View a video on how to help prevent tick bites](#)

Tick control on your property

- Keep grass cut short.
- Remove leaf litter and debris which can act as a moist environment for ticks to thrive in.
- Create a 3 foot barrier of wood chips between your lawn and bushy vegetation or wooded areas.
- Select plantings that do not attract deer.

**For tick-borne disease data and additional prevention information,
call the Westchester County Department of Health
at (914) 813-5000 or visit www.westchestergov.com/health.**