

- ◆ Check yourself and children every 2 to 3 hours for ticks. Most ticks seldom attach quickly and rarely transmit tick-borne disease until they have been attached for 4 or more hours.
- ◆ Check outdoor pets for ticks.
- ◆ Infected ticks can also transmit disease to them.
- ◆ After being outdoors, remove clothing and wash and dry at a high temperature.

TICK CONTROL

Removing leaves and clearing brush and tall grass around your home and at the edges of gardens may reduce the numbers of ticks.

IF BITTEN BY A TICK...

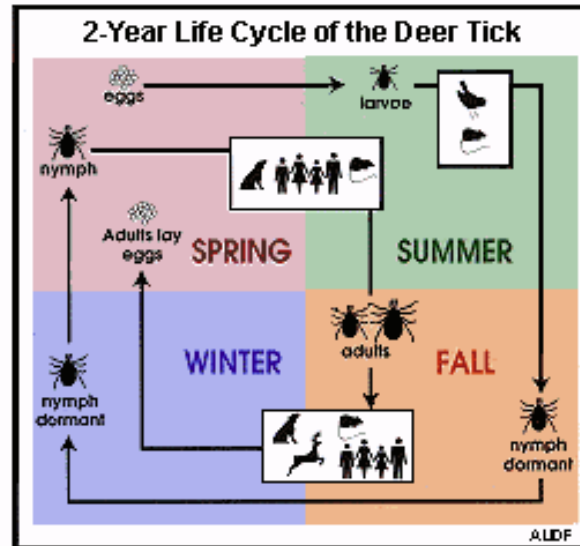
Remove any tick promptly. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with fine-point tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick.

You may keep the tick in a jar of rubbing alcohol labeled with date and location of the bite in case identification is necessary.

Wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water, and apply an antiseptic to the bite site.

CAN LYME DISEASE BE TREATED?

If you experience a bull's eye rash or any unexplained illness accompanied by fever following a tick bite, you should consult your physician. Treatment of Lyme disease consists of administration of the appropriate antibiotics.



DEER TICKS & LYME DISEASE



Deer Tick—Adult Female
Diameter—Less than 1/8 inch



MCHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
2200 NORTH SEMINARY AVENUE
WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS 60098
PH: 815-334-4585
FAX: 815-334-4637
WEBSITE: www.mcdh.info



MCHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
2200 NORTH SEMINARY AVENUE
WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS 60098
PH: 815-334-4585
FAX: 815-334-4637
WEBSITE: www.mcdh.info



Ticks live in and near wooded areas, tall grass and brush and, if infected, can spread various diseases including Lyme disease. Lyme disease is a bacterial disease which was first recognized in the United States in 1975. It is transmitted by infected deer ticks. Deer ticks infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease have been found in Illinois. Exposure to ticks occurs most often from spring through early fall. Not all ticks carry the bacterium, and a tick bite does not always result in the development of Lyme disease.

IDENTIFYING TICKS

Deer ticks are much smaller than common dog and cattle ticks. In their larval and nymphal stages, they are no bigger than a pin head. Adult ticks are slightly larger. Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but often attach to the more hidden and hairy areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp.

Developmental stages of a deer tick

Blacklegged Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



CAN LYME DISEASE BE TREATED?

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease can vary greatly from one person to another. A ring like rash, resembling a bull's-eye occurs in about 60% of cases and begins 3 to 32 days after the bite of an infected deer tick. Often this rash is accompanied by one or more nonspecific symptoms: fatigue, chills and fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes, and joint and muscle pain.

Some people are not diagnosed with Lyme disease in its initial stages because early symptoms are similar to those of more common diseases, and many people do not recall a tick bite. Weeks to months or years later other symptoms can develop if the disease is not treated. These include neurological symptoms, certain heart irregularities, and most commonly arthritis.

HOW TICKS FIND HOSTS

Most ticks spend the bulk of their life on or near the ground, waiting for a suitable host animal. Since ticks cannot run, hop, fly, or move quickly, ticks must climb onto an appropriate object such as tall grass or weeds and wait for a suitable host to pass by. When ticks detect vibrations and chemical cues such as host odors or exhaled carbon dioxide, they will fall onto a passing host.

PREVENTION OF TICK-BORNE DISEASE

The best way to protect yourself against tick-borne disease is to avoid tick bites. The following precautions will reduce the likelihood of tick bites:

- ◆ Wear white or light colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants so that the tiny ticks are easier to see.
- ◆ Check your clothing often for ticks climbing toward open skin.
- ◆ Tuck long pants into your socks and boots.
- ◆ Tape the area where pants and socks meet so that ticks cannot crawl under clothing.
- ◆ Wear a head covering or hat for added protection.
- ◆ Apply insect repellent containing DEET (30 percent or less) to exposed areas. Use repellents containing permethrin to treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) while in locations where ticks may be common. Follow label directions; do not misuse or overuse repellents. Always supervise children in the use of repellents.
- ◆ Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you.