



RESOURCES



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TICKS

Resources & Information on Tickborne Disease and Prevention

Center for Disease Control (CDC): Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases
www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html

MA DPH: Monthly Tick-borne Disease Reports
www.mass.gov/lists/monthly-tick-borne-disease-reports

MA Department of Public Health: Tick Repellents
www.mass.gov/info-details/tick-repellents

Tick Report: Order Tick Tests Online
<https://www.tickreport.com/>



Contact us

Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative

Proudly serving Sudbury, Wayland, Weston, Concord, Carlisle, Lincoln, and Bedford



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Ticks are more than just a nuisance—they can spread serious diseases. This guide will help you understand the risks, recognize symptoms, and take simple, effective steps to stay safe while enjoying the outdoors.

Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative

What You Can Do

What are Ticks?

Ticks are found throughout Massachusetts and are bugs that feed on the blood of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Tick-borne diseases are transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. You are most likely to be bitten by a tick in the spring, summer, or fall; however, ticks can survive in the winter if temperatures are above freezing. Warmer winters could increase the number of ticks and the risk for spreading tickborne diseases.

Types of Ticks

Deer Ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Deer ticks, both young (nymphs) and adults, bite humans and are most active in spring through fall—but can also be out during warm winter days. They're tiny and hard to spot: nymphs are the size of a poppy seed, and adults the size of a sesame seed.

American Dog Ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*)



Dog ticks are responsible for spreading Rocky Mountain spotted fever and certain types of tularemia. In general, only the adult dog tick will bite humans. The highest risk of being bitten by a dog tick occurs during the spring and summer seasons. Adult dog ticks are about the size of a watermelon seed.

Lonestar Ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*)



Lone star ticks are not a significant source of human illness in Massachusetts at this time but are capable of spreading tularemia, ehrlichiosis and southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI). Lone star tick saliva can be irritating but redness and discomfort at a bite site does not necessarily indicate any infection. The nymph and adult females most frequently bite humans.



Scan the QR code to learn more ticks & tick-borne diseases in Massachusetts

Or Visit:

[MA DPH Tickborne Illness](http://MA.DPH.TickborneIllness)

SCAN HERE



Scan the QR code to view Monthly Tick-borne Disease Reports in MA

Or Visit:

[MA DPH Monthly Tick Reports](http://MA.DPH.MonthlyTickReports)

SCAN HERE

GMPHC Tick Testing Program

Mail in your tick for pathogen detection.

The Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative has established a tick testing subsidy program utilizing state grant funding.

The purpose of the program is to help all residents that reside in the GMPHC Region learn what disease causing microbes a discovered tick may be carrying, including the pathogens in Deer ticks that cause Lyme disease.

How Does it Work?

The Tick Testing program includes testing for detection of seven different pathogens in Deer ticks (Blacklegged ticks) that cause Lyme disease, and eight different pathogens in non-deer tick species, including tests for Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) and Southern-Tick Associated Rash Illness (STARI) in Lone Star ticks.

Mail Your Tick

Place your tick — whole or partial — in a plastic bag and mail it to the tick testing lab. The lab will identify the tick and determine the correct tests to apply. Ticks may also be hand delivered to the Tick Report laboratory at 29 Cottage St. C, Amherst, Massachusetts.



The Tick Report Website can be found at: www.tickreport.com

Tick Testing Subsidy Program

Although a tick test is \$50, residents in the Great Meadows Public Health Collaborative (Sudbury, Wayland, Weston, Concord, Carlisle, Lincoln, Bedford) can order a tick test from tickreport.com for \$20. State grant funding was approved to establish this program, which provides a \$30 subsidy for each tick tested.

To take advantage of the program, enter your zip code at checkout and the subsidy will automatically be applied.

Tick Test Results

Your specific tick test results are securely and privately delivered via email no longer than three business days after your tick sample(s) arrive at the lab for analysis. Most results are delivered within 24 hours of your sample arriving at the lab.



Scan to order a tick test from tickreport.com



SCAN ME



Check For Ticks

Tick checks help prevent infections spread by ticks!



After being outdoors conduct a full body check
Use a mirror or ask someone to check areas that are hard to see

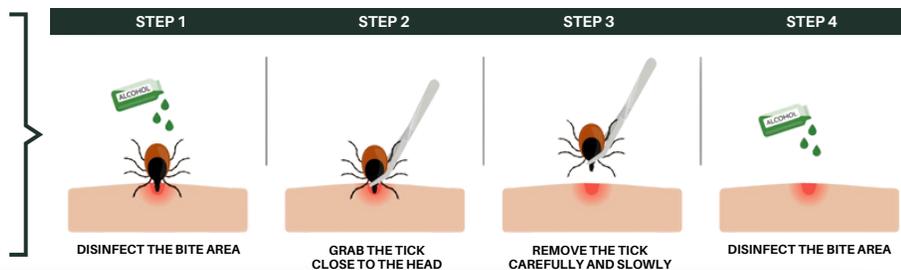
Check the Following Areas



What Should I Do If I Find a Tick on Myself?

If you find a tick attached to your skin, don't panic. Use a pair of fine point tweezers to grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out with steady pressure.

How To Properly Remove a Tick



Tickborne Illness

Dog ticks can spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Tularemia

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF)

A rare bacterial illness in Massachusetts that causes high fever, severe headache, tiredness, and a rash on the palms and soles. It appears 3–14 days after a tick bite and is mostly found in southeastern MA, Cape Cod, and Martha's Vineyard.

Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)

A bacterial disease spread by dog ticks. Symptoms—like a slow-healing skin sore and swollen glands—usually appear 3 to 21 days after a bite. Most common on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket.

Deer ticks can spread Lyme disease, Babesiosis and Anaplasmosis

Lyme Disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*)

A bacterial disease spread by deer ticks. Symptoms—like a slow-healing skin sore and swollen glands—usually appear 3 to 21 days after a bite. Most common on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket.

Over the last decade, the number of Lyme disease cases has averaged over

3,000 in Massachusetts

Lyme Disease is the most common tick transmitted disease in Massachusetts

Babesiosis

Babesiosis is a tick-borne illness that can cause fever, chills, fatigue, and body aches. Many people have mild or no symptoms, but it can be serious for older adults or those with weak immune systems.

Anaplasmosis (*Anaplasma phagocytophilum*)

A bacterial disease transmitted by deer ticks that must be attached for 12–24 hours to spread the infection. Symptoms like fever, headache, and muscle aches appear 7–14 days after a bite and can become life-threatening, especially in older adults or those with weakened immune systems. In Massachusetts, cases have increased significantly since 2008, with the highest rates on Cape Cod, the Islands, and in Berkshire County.

Powassan Virus/Deer Tick Virus and Ehrlichiosis can be spread by deer & dog ticks

Powassan Virus / Deer Tick Virus

Powassan virus and deer tick virus are closely related and spread by different ticks—woodchuck ticks and deer ticks. Transmission can occur in just 15 minutes. Symptoms include fever, confusion, and memory loss. About 10% of cases are fatal, and some survivors have lasting neurological issues. Though rare, these viruses are likely present across Massachusetts, with 7 cases reported between 2013 and 2015.

Ehrlichiosis (*Ehrlichia chaffeensis*)

A bacterial disease (*Ehrlichia chaffeensis*) that causes fever, headache, muscle aches and pain, anorexia, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and confusion. Symptoms occur 1–2 weeks after being bitten. Illness may be severe with rare fatalities. Transmitted by the lone star tick which has only been found in southeastern Massachusetts. Recently reported in Massachusetts. There were 20 cases in 2014 and 7 in 2015.



What You Can Do

Avoid Direct Contact With Ticks

Prevention Methods & Tick Repellents

Check for Ticks & Utilize Prevention Methods

Use the Following Prevention Measures: Utilize these tips for tick management around you home and for when you are outdoors

Use the Following Prevention Measures! Utilize these tips for keeping yourself and your pets safe after being outdoors

Avoid tall grass and tick to trails



Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Stick to main pathways and the center of trails if you can. Avoid trails that are overgrown.



Dress tick smart!

Weather permitting, wear long-sleeved, light-colored shirts and long pants tucked into your socks. This will help keep ticks away from your skin and make it easier to spot ticks on your clothing.

Check yourself for ticks once a day!



It's the single most important thing you can do. It can take 24 hours or more for infected ticks to spread disease, so even if you get a tick bite, you may be able to stop yourself from getting sick just by removing the tick promptly.

Rinse off when you get home



Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within 2 hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.

Check your bags and gear

Before you go inside, do a quick (but thorough!) check of any gear, or equipment you used while outside.



Treat dogs for ticks

Dogs are susceptible to tick bites and to some tickborne diseases. They may also bring ticks into your home. Tick collars, sprays, shampoos, or monthly "top spot" medications help protect against ticks.



Dry your clothes on high heat

Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.



Utilize tick repellent



When outdoors, use repellents containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, some oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol. Follow the directions on the package.

Decrease the amount of tick habitat around your home

- Keep grass cut short
- Remove leaf litter and brush from around your home
- Prune low lying bushes to let in more sunlight
- Keep woodpiles and birdfeeders off the ground and away from your home to reduce the number of rodents which serve as hosts for ticks
- Keep the plants around stone walls cut short
- Use a 3 foot wide woodchip, mulch or gravel barrier where your lawn meets the woods. wooded area may be at higher risk of getting ticks.
- Ask your local nursery about plants to use in your yard that do not attract deer
- Use deer fencing (for yards 15 acres or more)



What kind of repellent should I use?

Different products work against different kinds of bugs. It is important to look at the "active ingredient" on the product label. Products with DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or permethrin are recommended for protection against ticks

Do "natural" repellents work?

Plant-based products are available—but they don't last as long or work as well against ticks.

How to Use Repellent Safely

- Follow the label instructions
- Don't apply under clothing or to broken skin
- Keep away from eyes, mouth, and ears
- Apply to hands first before putting on your face or a child's skin
- Avoid applying to children's hands
- Wash treated skin and clothing after use
- **DEET**: Safe for skin or clothes (but can damage synthetic fabrics)
- Permethrin: Use only on clothing, shoes, or gear—never on skin

If you choose to use a pesticide to reduce the number of ticks on your property, hire a licensed applicator experienced with tick control.

If you suspect that you or your child is having an adverse reaction to a repellent remove contact your doctor or local poison control center. The toll-free number for the Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention (serving MA and RI) is (800) 222-1222.

