



Tick Bites & Lyme Disease

Fight the Bite: Tick Bite Management

TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection that you can get if you are bitten by an infected deer tick. In most cases, the infected tick **must attach and feed on you for at least 24 hours** for the bacteria to spread to you. The risk of developing Lyme disease following a tick bite by an infected tick is between **1% and 3%**.

Most humans are infected through the bite of immature ticks that are about the size of a poppy seed, called nymphs. Adult ticks are about the size of a sesame seed, and they can also spread Lyme disease.

There are **two types of ticks** that can spread Lyme disease in Canada:

- **Blacklegged tick** or **deer tick** (*Ixodes scapularis*) in southeastern and south-central regions of Canada
- **Western blacklegged tick** (*Ixodes pacificus*) in BC

What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

If you are infected with Lyme disease, the **symptoms usually start 3 - 30 days after the tick bite** and may include:

- **Rash** (may look like a bulls-eye). A rash appears in 60 -80% of infected people.
- **Fever, tiredness, decreased appetite, body aches, headache, mild stiff neck.**

What kind of tick was attached to me?

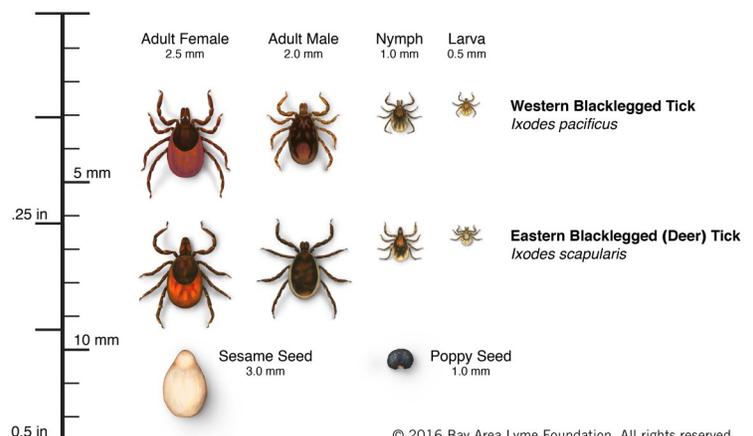
Blacklegged ticks are most often found in wooded or forested areas, in leaf litter or on shrubs and tall grass.

If you are not sure what type of tick bit you, you can bring your tick to the health unit or visit www.etick.ca

Southwestern Public Health accepts ticks that were attached to humans only.

Tick test results may take weeks. The health unit will call with results once available. Note: The purpose of tick testing is to monitor local tick populations not manage human health.

If you have concerns about your health, talk to your health care provider right away. Lyme disease can be diagnosed and treated without the tick results. See next page for more information.



Were you bitten by a deer tick in the last 30 days?

Did you know... Only female black-legged deer ticks can spread the bacteria (*Borellia burgdorferi*) that causes Lyme disease.

Not sure what kind of tick bit you? Consider bringing it to the health unit for identification or visit www.etic.ca



How long was the tick attached to you?

Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but are often found in hard-to-see areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 24 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted. Reference: Health Quality Ontario

The tick attached to you for more than 24 hours

Did you develop symptoms of Lyme disease in the 3-30 days after the tick was removed?

Symptoms include:

- ✓ Rash (may look like a bulls-eye) and develops in 60-80% of infected people
- ✓ Fever, body aches, headache, tiredness

Talk to your health care provider right away if you have symptoms of Lyme disease.

I HAVE symptoms of Lyme disease

Do you live or work in a Lyme disease risk area? OR Have you travelled to a Lyme disease risk area in the last 30 days?

In Ontario, currently identified risk areas for Lyme disease are along the north shores of Lake Erie (including Port Burwell Provincial Park) and Lake Ontario; parts of Thousand Islands National Park; Kingston and surrounding area along the St. Lawrence Valley to the border with Quebec and northeast towards Ottawa; Northwestern Ontario in the region of Lake of the Woods; Pinery Park on the shore of Lake Huron. Reference: Health Canada

I live, work or travelled to a Lyme disease risk areas

I DO NOT live or work in a Lyme disease risk area

Clinical Case of Lyme disease

- ✓ Talk to your health care provider about your symptoms and tick bite
- ✓ Your health care provider **SHOULD** treat you for Lyme disease
- ✓ Bloodwork (testing) **IS NOT** recommended
- ✓ If your symptoms worsen or do not improve, you may need to see a specialist

Possible Lyme disease

- ✓ Talk to your health care provider about your symptoms and tick bite
- ✓ Your health care provider **MAY** treat you for Lyme disease
- ✓ **Bloodwork (testing) is NOT recommended**
- ✓ If your symptoms do not improve, you may need to see a specialist

Next Steps:

Follow the decision making tree to the right to help you decide what to do next →

My Tick Bite Details

Date of tick bite: _____ Date tick was removed: _____

Length of time tick was attached: _____ hours or days (circle one)

Where did the tick bite happen (City, Province): _____ (be as specific as possible)

If you have symptoms, what are they and when did they start? _____

I was bitten by a deer tick in the last 30 days

Tick was
MORE
hours

The tick was
attached **LESS** than
24 hours

I **DO NOT** have
symptoms of Lyme
disease

I live, work or
travelled to a Lyme
disease risk areas

I **DO NOT** live or work
in a Lyme disease risk
area

The tick was removed
less than 3 days ago

The tick was removed
more than 3 days ago

You are at Risk for Lyme disease

- ✓ Talk to your health care provider about your tick bite
- ✓ This is the **ideal time to start antibiotics to prevent Lyme disease**

Note: Antibiotics must be started within 3 days of removing the tick. Doxycycline is not recommended for pregnant women

You are at Risk for Lyme disease

- ✓ Watch for symptoms of Lyme disease for 3-30 days after the tick was removed
- ✓ Talk to your health care provider about your tick bite
- ✓ Antibiotics to prevent Lyme disease are **not recommended** at this time

Your risk for Lyme disease is LOW

- ✓ Watch for symptoms in the 3-30 days after the tick was removed
- ✓ Talk to your health care provider if you develop symptoms

Your risk for Lyme disease is LOW

- ✓ Watch for symptoms in the 3-30 days after the tick was removed
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My Next Steps

- Call my health care provider
- Watch for signs and symptoms of Lyme disease between _____ to _____ (dates)
- Prevent tick bites by wearing bug repellent containing DEET, wear light-coloured long sleeves and pants, tuck my pants into socks, wear closed-toed shoes, check my pets for ticks, oth-

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM TICK BITES

Did you know that ticks begin biting as soon as the snow melts and until the next snowfall! You are most at risk for a tick bite when temperatures are between 4-10^o Celsius.

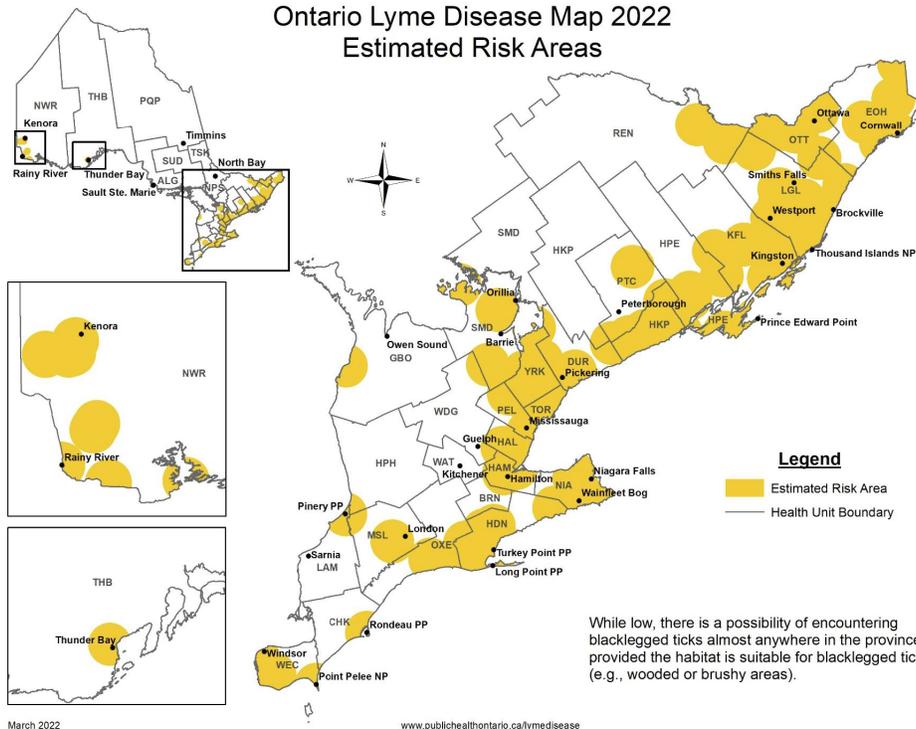
- Wear light coloured long-sleeves, and pants tucked into your socks, and closed toe shoes.
- Use bug spray containing DEET.
- Check yourself, your pets and others for ticks after you've been outdoors. Don't forget to check the hard to see areas (behind the ears, in the creases etc.).
- Keep your yard free of leaf litter and keep the bushy and grassy areas pruned.

LYME DISEASE RISK AREAS

- There are Lyme disease risk areas throughout Ontario and Canada. To learn more about the Lyme disease risk areas in Canada, the United States and Europe, visit:
 - * Ontario: www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/vector-borne-zoonotic-diseases/lyme-disease
 - * Canada: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/lyme-disease/risk-lyme-disease.html#map
 - * United States: www.cdc.gov/lyme/stats/maps.html
- * In Europe, the areas of highest risk are in Central and Eastern Europe, but infected ticks have also been found in Southern Scandinavia and up to the northern Mediterranean region.



Ontario Lyme Disease Map 2022
Estimated Risk Areas



While low, there is a possibility of encountering blacklegged ticks almost anywhere in the province, provided the habitat is suitable for blacklegged ticks (e.g., wooded or brushy areas).

