

What You Need to Know

WHAT ARE TICKS, AND WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Ticks are arachnids, like scorpions, spiders, and mites. As adults, they have four pairs of legs and no antennae. Ticks must feed on the blood of host animals in order to survive. Ticks can feed on mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, and many tick species prefer to have a different host animal at each stage of their life cycle (larva, nymph, and adult). Ticks are among the most efficient carriers of disease because they attach firmly when feeding and can take several days to complete a feeding, often going unnoticed due to their very small size (nymphs can be the size of a poppy seed).

Tickborne diseases are diseases spread by the bite of an infected tick. The most common tickborne diseases in the United States include Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Lyme Disease, Powassan Virus, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

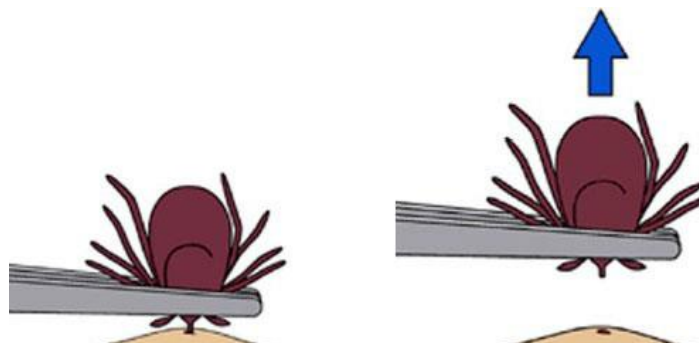
ARE THERE TICKS IN OAKLAND COUNTY?

Ticks are found in nearly every county in Michigan. Tick populations are thriving, most likely due in part to rising temperatures and an increase in animal hosts. The American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) is the tick most often identified in Michigan and Oakland County. The Blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) is the carrier of Lyme Disease and is endemic in portions of the Upper Peninsula and the western Lower Peninsula. These ticks are also referred to as Deer ticks and are quickly expanding into new areas across the state.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND A TICK?

If you find a tick attached to your skin, you want to remove the tick as soon as possible. A set of fine-tipped tweezers works well.

- **Grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.**
- **Pull upward with steady, even pressure.** Don't twist or jerk the tick, as this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- **After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.**
- **If you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor.** Be sure to tell the doctor about your recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where you most likely acquired the tick.



Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, or wrapping it tightly in tape. Do not use petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, or a hot match to remove a tick; these methods can increase the risk of disease transmission.

If you find a tick and want it identified, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) can identify a tick if you send a photo; for more information go to:

<https://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/0,4579,7-186-76935---,00.html>

HOW CAN I PREVENT TICK BITES?

Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during warmer months (April - September).

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, hiking, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in the center of trails.
- **Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents** containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old. Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin (do not use permethrin on skin).
- **Check your body for ticks after being outdoors.** Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:
 - Under the arms
 - In and around the ears
 - Inside belly button
 - Back of the knees
 - In and around the hair
 - Between the legs
 - Around the waist
- **Check your clothing, gear, and pets for ticks.** Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and daypacks. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. Talk to your veterinarian about the best tick prevention products for your pet.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Lyme Disease – Oakland County Health Division](#)

[Ticks - Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Ticks and Your Health – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, & Michigan State University](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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NURSE ON CALL PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION
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