



Beat the Bite: Stay Tick-Free

Tick-borne disease prevention

Ticks are tiny bugs that live in damp, grassy brushy or wooded places – even in your backyard. You can get tick bites at any time of the year, but they happen more often in the warm weather when people spend more time outside. Ticks don’t jump or fly. They typically latch onto clothing or skin when a person’s arms or legs brush against vegetation such as leaves or branches. They only bite if they touch the skin directly.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the two most common types of ticks in the state of Massachusetts are the Black-Legged tick (also called the deer tick) and the American Dog tick. A newer type, the Lone Star tick, has also been found in some areas, especially in Cape Cod and the Islands ([Data Source](#)).

Ticks can carry several diseases and can pass them to people and pets when they bite. These diseases can make you feel sick for a short time, and some can lead to long-term health problems. Lyme disease is the most common and probably the most well-known illness spread by tick in the state of Massachusetts, followed by Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis. Alpha-gal syndrome is an emerging disease in Massachusetts typically carried by the Lone Star Tick.

Types of Ticks



Black-legged Tick/Deer Tick	Dog Tick	Lone Star Tick
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyme Disease • Babesiosis • Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis (Anaplasmosis)* • Borrelia miyamotoi • Powassan virus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever • Tularemia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tularemia • Ehrlichiosis • Southern Tick Associated Rash Illness (STARI) • <i>Emerging Massachusetts Disease: Alpha-gal Syndrome</i>. Watch a video about the tick induced allergy to Red Meat



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Prevention tips:

The good news is that preventing tick bites is much easier than treating the illnesses they cause.

When spending time outdoors, assist individuals to:

- Wear long sleeves and pants – tuck pants into socks to keep ticks out.
- Wear light-colored clothes so ticks are easier to spot.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents (<https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/prevention/index.html>). Always follow the directions on the label.

MAP Reminder: A Health Care Provider order is NOT needed for the use of Bug Spray or Sunscreen

Check for ticks every day- especially after spending time in grassy or wooded areas. Look carefully in places ticks like to hide:

- Inside and behind the ears
- In the hair
- Along the hairline and the back of the neck
- Under the arms (Armpits)
- Legs
- Along the waist and groin
- Behind the knees
- Between the toes

Ticks are small so look closely-some are tiny as a poppy seed or a sesame seed. If you see a new “freckle,” it might be a tick!

What to Do After a Tick Bite

The CDC has created a useful handout with [What to Do After a Tick Bite | Ticks | CDC](#)

Lyme Disease Prophylaxis After Tick Bite

In Massachusetts, where [Lyme disease](#) is prevalent, it is important to check each person for tick bites daily. Early detection and prompt removal of ticks can greatly reduce the risk of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses.

In certain circumstances, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a single dose of [prophylaxis](#) antibiotics (doxycycline) to help prevent Lyme disease following a tick bite. This is true if:

- The tick is identified as a black-legged tick (also known as a deer tick or Ixodes Scapularis).
- The tick is engorged with blood.
- Doxycycline is safe for the patient.
- Prophylaxis is most effective when started within 72 hours of tick removal.

Consult with the individual's doctor to determine if they should receive a dose of doxycycline



Health Services
Department of Developmental Services

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For more information about Tick-borne diseases and prevention visit:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH): [Tick-borne disease prevention](#)

Environmental Protection Agency: [Repellents: Protection against Mosquitoes, Ticks and Other Arthropods](#)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH): [Tick-borne disease surveillance summaries and data](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Ticks](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [What to Do After a Tick Bite & Tick Removal](#)

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