

# Beat the bite: Stay tick-free this summer

## 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 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 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 on some areas especially on Cape Cod and the Islands.

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 problem. Lyme disease is the most common and probably the most well know illness spread by tick in the state of in Massachusetts followed by Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis.



**Black-Legged Tick (Deer Tick)**

- [Lyme Disease](#)
- [Babesiosis](#)
- [Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis \(Anaplasmosis\)\\*](#)
- [Borrelia miyamotoi](#)
- [Powassan virus](#)

**Dog Ticks**

- [Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever](#)
- [Tularemia](#)

**Lone Star Ticks**

Lone star ticks have been identified in the Massachusetts on the Cape and Islands ([Data Source](#)).

- [Tularemia](#)
- Ehrlichiosis
- Southern Tick Associated Rash Illness (STARI)
- \**Emerging Massachusetts Disease: [Alpha-gal Syndrome](#)*. 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 insect repellent with DEET on skin (no more than 30-35% DEET for adults and 10-15% for kids). Spray permethrin on clothing, not on the skin. Always follow the directions on the label. Never use repellent on babies.

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
- Hair
- Along the hairline and the back of the neck
- Under the arms
- Around the waist and groin
- Behind the knees
- Between the toes

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

## Lyme Disease Prophylaxis After Tick Bite

In Massachusetts, where Lyme disease is prevalent, it is important to check each individual 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:

- The tick is identified as a black-legged tick (also known as a deer tick, /Ixodes Scapularis).
- The tick has been attached for at least 24 hours, or the Tick is engorged with blood.
- 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.**

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

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

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

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH): [Tick removal](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Lyme Disease Prophylaxis After Tick Bite](#)