



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Remember to do a Daily Tick Check!

Canton, NY— The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department is preparing for warmer weather and the surge in the tick population. With Memorial Day right around the corner, people are beginning to spend more time outdoors and should remember to take precautions to prevent diseases that are transmitted by ticks.

Ticks can expose people to diseases such as Lyme disease. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria transmitted through bites from infected blacklegged-deer ticks. According to a 2017 study conducted by the New York State Department of Health, 50% of deer ticks in St. Lawrence County tested positive for carrying the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, which is why it is critical residents take precautions when enjoying the outdoors. Lyme disease can affect people of any age, causing fever, headache, joint pain, a bull's-eye skin rash, and other more serious complications.

To protect yourself from a tick bite, you should:

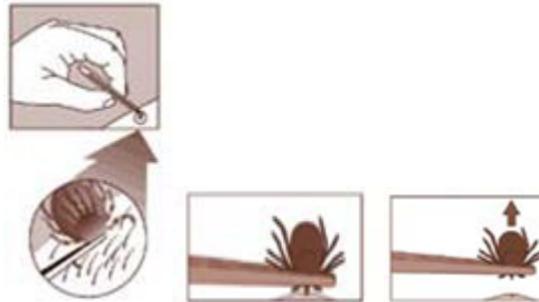
1. Wear light colored clothing to easily spot ticks, wear enclosed shoes, long pants and long-sleeves, and tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
2. Use bug spray containing 20% or more of DEET and spray on shoes, clothing and hats. Avoid spraying directly onto the skin.
3. Keep long hair tied back, especially when gardening.
4. Bathe or shower as soon as possible after going indoors to wash off and more easily find ticks.
5. Put clothing in the dryer for 20 minutes to kill possible unfound ticks.
6. Most importantly, do a **full-body** tick check at the end of each day. The sooner you remove a tick from your body; the chances of the tick infecting you with the bacteria decreases.

To reduce ticks in your yard, you can:

1. Keep lawns mowed and edges trimmed.
2. Clear brush, leaf litter and tall grass around the house, and at the edges of gardens and stone walls.
3. Keep the ground under bird feeders clean so small animals that can carry ticks are not attracted to your yard.
4. Place children's swing sets and other play equipment in a sunny, dry area of the yard, away from the woods where ticks can be abundant.
5. Stack woodpiles neatly away from the house and preferably off the ground.

If you do find a tick on your body, stay calm! Not all deer ticks are infected, and **your risk of Lyme disease is significantly reduced if the tick is removed within the first 36 hours**. To remove a tick:

1. Use a pair of pointed tweezers, and grasp the tick by the head or mouth, where they enter the skin.
2. Firmly pull the tick in a steady, upward motion. DO NOT jerk or twist the tick.
3. Clean the bite wound with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide.
4. Monitor the site of the bite for the next 30 days for the appearance of the rash. If you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately.



When removing a tick, it is very important you keep the following in mind: **Do not** squeeze the tick; this will cause the tick to regurgitate its bacteria directly into the place where it is feeding. **Do not** pour kerosene or essential oils on the tick; this does not make the removal process easier. **Do not** rub vaseline on the tick; this will not suffocate the tick. **Do not** use a smoldering match or cigarette butt. Tick removal can be tricky, but if you follow the tick removal process listed above, you will be able to properly and safely remove a tick from your body.

Ticks are active from April through November, depending on the weather. This Memorial Day weekend, make sure you perform daily tick checks on yourself and your children after gardening, camping, hiking, playing outdoors and doing other outdoor activities. For more information on ticks and Lyme disease visit our website https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/PublicHealth/LymeDisease_WestNileVirus or call the Public Health Department at 315-386-2325.

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