

Tick Season is Here!

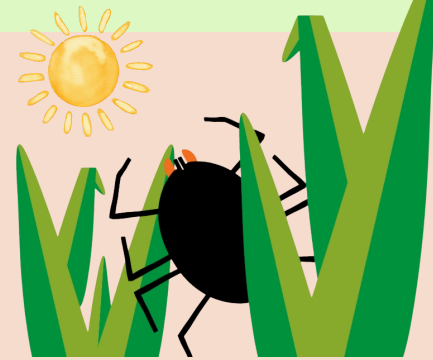
What You Need To Know

Ticks are very common in the Northeast and can spread diseases like Lyme disease, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis. These can cause serious illness, ranging from flu-like symptoms to long-term complications.

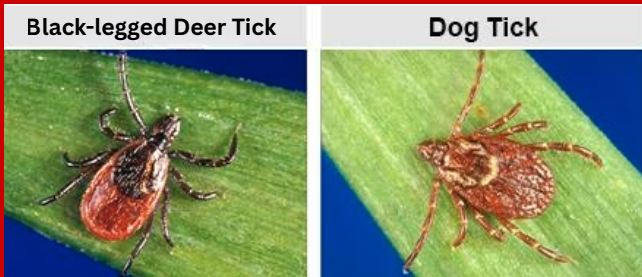


When & Where Ticks are Active

- 🕒 Peak Season: April-September
But active year-round if temps are above freezing
- 🌡️ Ticks live in:
 - Brushy, grassy, and wooded areas
 - Yards, leaf litter, and tall grass
 - On pets that go outdoors



Common Ticks in Western Massachusetts



- Can carry
- Lyme disease
 - Anaplasmosis
 - Babesiosis
 - Ehrlichiosis
 - Powassan virus

- Can carry
- Tularemia
 - Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

- Not all ticks carry disease-causing agents, but there are a few in the Northeast that can be harmful.
- Tick-borne illnesses have symptoms that usually occur between 3 and 30 days. Symptoms may range from rashes to flu-like symptoms.
- In order to transmit disease, a tick typically needs to remain attached for anywhere between 12 to 48 hours, depending on the species and the specific pathogen it carries.



Alpha-Gal Syndrome



Lone Star Tick

- Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergy to alpha gal (a molecule that is naturally produced in most mammals but not in people) that can develop after a tick bite.
- In the U.S, the Lone Star Tick is the species most associated with alpha-gal syndrome, however other ticks may also trigger it. Lone star ticks are usually found in the Southern and South-Central states, however they are becoming more prevalent in MA, especially in areas around the Cape.
- When a tick bites, it can transfer alpha-gal from its saliva into a person's blood. AGS can develop weeks to months after a tick bite.
- Symptoms occur after people who have been bitten eat red meat or consume other products made from mammals.
- Symptoms can occur 2-6 hours after being exposed to products containing alpha-gal, like red meat or dairy products. Symptoms can include hives, rashes, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Ask your doctor for more information.
- Preventing tick bites is the best way to reduce your risk of developing alpha-gal syndrome.



Tick-bite Prevention Tips



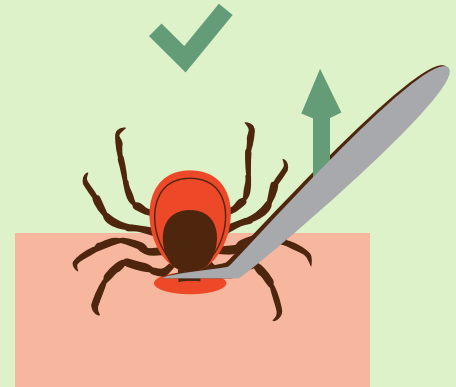
- Do regular tick checks on yourself, your kids, and your pets after going outdoors
- Focus on: scalp, ears, underarms, waist, behind knees
- Wear light-colored, tightly woven clothing
- Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants
- Stick to center of trails while hiking
- Use EPA-approved repellents like DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), or Picaridin on skin. Apply Permethrin only to clothing or gear
- Shower within a few hours of being outdoors, and wash clothes in hot water followed by a high-heat tumble dry
- Keep lawns trimmed and remove leaf litter



If You Find a Tick on You

Don't panic! If you find a tick on you

1. Use clean, fine-point tweezers
2. Grasp tick close to skin and pull slowly straight up and away from the skin
3. Do NOT twist, burn, or apply substances to the tick
4. Clean bite area with soap & water or antiseptic
5. Note the date of the bite and location on the body
6. Save the tick in a plastic bag if you want to test it



Follow-Up

If you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your healthcare provider:

- Tell your provider about your recent tick bite
- When the bite occurred, and
- Where you most likely acquired the tick

If you believe the tick was attached for more than 24 hours—especially if it was engorged when removed- it's a good idea to contact your healthcare provider right away to ask whether preventive antibiotics are recommended.

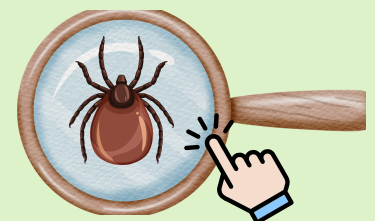
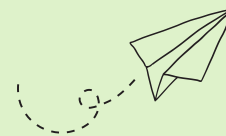


Tick Identification & Testing

Get Your Tick Identified – FREE!

Submit a photo to:

web.uri.edu/tickencounter/tickspotters



Tick Testing: Helpful but not Clinically Necessary

Testing ticks can reveal whether or not it carries certain pathogens, but it's essential to note that this does not necessarily affect the course of treatment. Healthcare providers treat based on symptoms and exposure risk, not the tick's test results. However, some may argue tick testing has its benefits. It can provide scientists with data on local tick types and pathogens, helping track disease risk and changes in tick populations. It is up to you if you would like to test your tick or not.

- Lab tests for ticks cost between \$35 and \$200, depending on the provider and what pathogens they screen for. To find specific pricing and details about the tests, you can check out these trusted sources: TickReport at tickreport.com, ECO Lab at ticktests.com, TestTicks at testticks.com, Ticknology at ticknology.org, and CVMDL from the University of Connecticut at cvmdl.uconn.edu.
- Visit <https://www.amherstma.gov/3784/Ticks> for more information