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THE NORTH COUNTRY HEALTH EFFECT

A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.



Ticks & tick-borne illnesses

Ticks can spread diseases that can make you very sick. Diseases spread by ticks are called “tick-borne.” Lyme disease, carried by the deer (black-legged) tick, is the most common disease spread by ticks in our county. For more information on Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses, flip to page 5.

Ticks are found most often in shady, moist areas. They cling to tall grass, brush and shrubs, usually no more than a few feet off the ground. They also live in lawns and gardens, especially at the edges of woods and around old stone walls. Once the temperature reaches 40°F, ticks will begin to come out from their winter hiding spots—even if there is still snow on the ground.

Ticks can’t jump or fly, and don’t drop onto passing people or animals. So how do they get on you? Through direct contact, like when your leg brushes up against grass. Once a tick gets on the skin, it will usually climb upwards until it reaches a hiding spot.

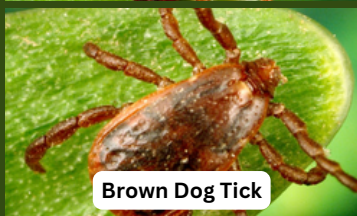


Keeping ticks away

Ticks often enter your yard through woods, tall grass, or on animals. Follow these tips so that fewer ticks enter your yard and those that do don’t have a place to hide.

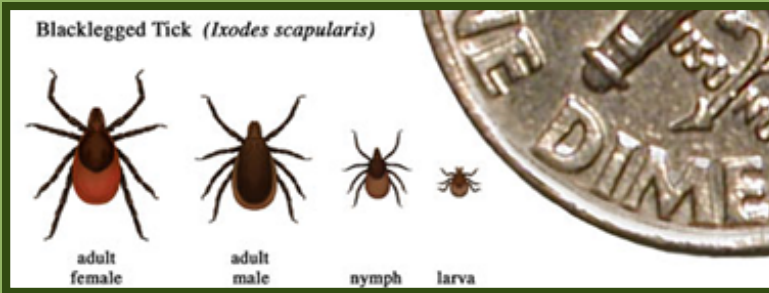
- Keep lawns mowed and edges trimmed.
- Clear brush, leaf litter and tall grass around the house, and at the edges of gardens, lawns, and stone walls.
- Stack woodpiles neatly in a dry area away from the house, preferably off the ground.
- Keep the ground under bird feeders clear of debris.
- Locate playground equipment, swing sets, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees. Place them in a sunny, dry location, if possible.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas, and around patios and play equipment.
- Keep your yard clear of anything that might be a good place for squirrels, chipmunks, mice, woodchucks or other small mammals to live.
- Teach your children to stay away from animal nests to reduce their chances of being bitten by a tick.

Ticks of the Northeast



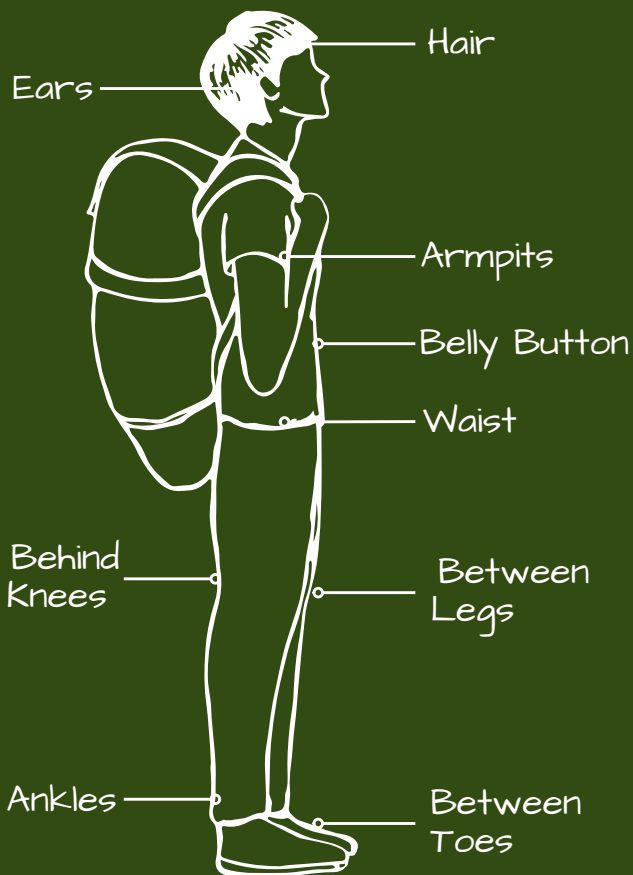
Spotting a tick

- Ticks often hide in the armpit, groin, hair, or behind the knees.
- Young deer ticks, called nymphs, are brown and the size of poppy seeds (~1 mm).
- Adult female deer ticks are red and black, while males are black. Adult deer ticks are about the size of a sesame seed (~3–4 mm).



Tick check

Regular tick checks are an important step to keep you and your family healthy.



Prevent the bite

Take a few easy steps to prevent bites from ticks and lower your chances of getting sick with a tick-borne illness. Prevention is your best defense!

Before you go outdoors

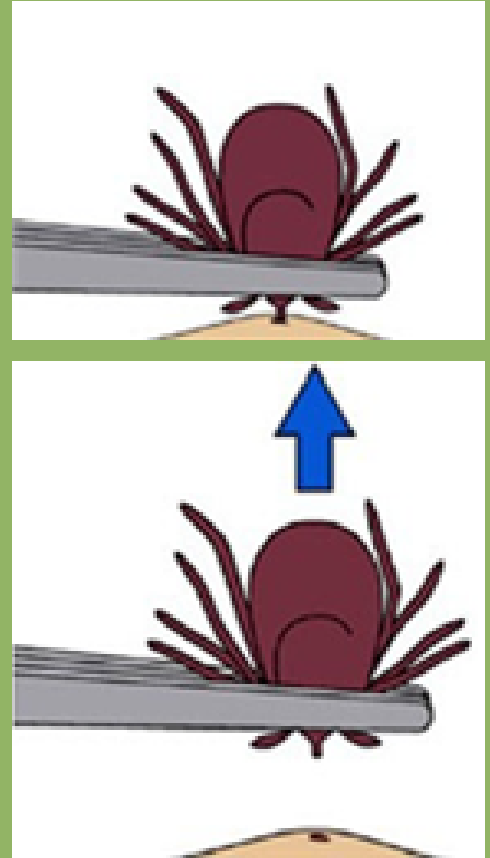
- **Apply an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent** that contains DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon, eucalyptus or 2-undecanone.
- **Cover your skin as much as possible.** Wear enclosed shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.
- **Wear light-colored clothing** with a tight weave to spot ticks easily.
- **Treat clothing and gear** (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents) with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings; see product information for details. Do NOT use permethrin products, intended to treat clothing, directly on skin.

After spending time outdoors

- **Do a tick check.** Look for ticks on your body. Use a mirror to help view all parts of your body.
- **Take a shower** as soon as you can to wash away unattached ticks and insect repellent you may have used.
- **Put your clothes in the dryer** on high heat for at least 10 minutes (and up to 60 minutes) to kill any ticks. The clothes should be warm and completely dry. If clothing is washed first, use hot water.
- **Don't forget to check your pets for ticks.** See page 6 for more on ticks and your pets.

Found a tick? Don't panic.

- **Not all ticks are infected.** Your risk of tick-borne illness decreases if the tick is removed within the first 24–36 hours.
- **Use fine-tipped tweezers** to grasp the tick at the surface of your skin.
- **Pull the tick straight up and out.** Don't twist or jerk the tick—this can cause the mouth parts to break off and stay in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth parts with tweezers, if you can. If not, leave them alone and let your skin heal.
- **Clean the bite and your hands** with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. You may get a small bump or redness that goes away in 1–2 days, like a mosquito bite. This is not a sign that you have Lyme disease.
- **Call your doctor** if you have a fever, get a rash, are very tired, or have joint pain within 30 days of a tick bite.
- Do not put hot matches, nail polish, or petroleum jelly on the tick to try to make it pull away from the skin.

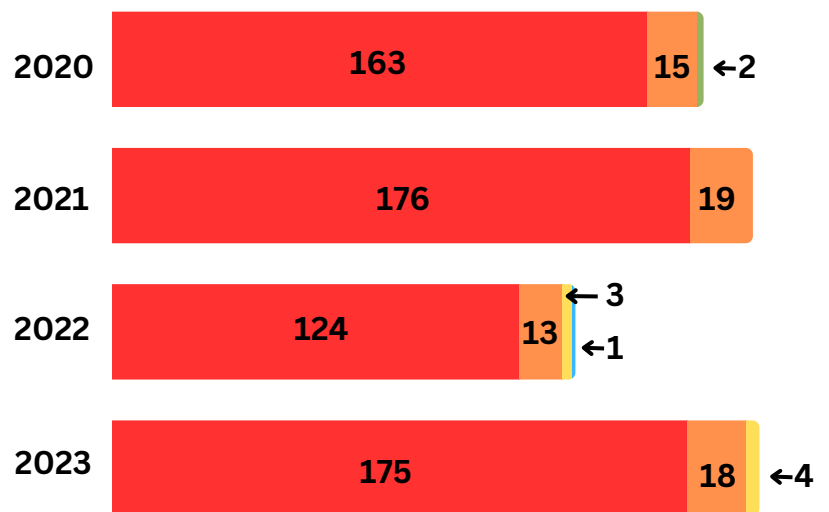


Tick-borne illnesses

Ticks can carry a variety of serious disease that can make you very sick. Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in Clinton County. A few of the other serious diseases spread by ticks include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis and Powassan virus. These diseases are less common but still a concern and are becoming more common in warmer climates. Ticks can also be 'co-infected' or have more than one disease at a time.

The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses include: fever and/ or chills; aches and pains; and rash.

Tick-borne illnesses in Clinton County Number of cases by year.



Total cases over four years

- Lyme Disease | 638 cases
- Anaplasmosis | 65 cases
- Babesiosis | 7 cases
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever | 2 cases
- Powassan virus | 1 case

A little on Lyme disease

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by the bite of an infected deer tick. It is the most common disease spread by ticks in our county. Untreated, Lyme disease can result in health problems. Patients treated with antibiotics in the early stage of the infection usually recover quickly and completely. Early symptoms of Lyme disease may be mild and easily missed.

If you have symptoms of a tick-borne illness, have had a tick bite (with or without rash) see your health care provider to determine if you need testing or treatment.

If a rash occurs, it is usually at the site of the tick bite and is a “bulls-eye” circular patch or solid red patch that grows larger. The rash typically isn’t painful or itchy, and may or may not be warm to the touch.

Treatment includes antibiotics, often for 2 - 3 weeks. Without treatment, you may develop severe arthritis and problems with nerves, spinal cord, brain or heart.

Allow yourself plenty of rest. You may feel tired while you are recovering, even though the infection is cured.

Some people wonder if there is a test to confirm that they are cured. Your body remembers an infection long after it has cleared, so additional blood tests might be positive for months or years. This doesn’t mean you are still infected.



What to look for

Call your doctor if you develop any of the following within 30 days of a tick bite:

- fever or chills
- headache
- rash
- severe fatigue
- muscle or joint pain
- swollen glands (lymph nodes)

Classic ‘bulls-eye’ rash?

Only 3 to 4 of every 5 people (60-80%) with Lyme disease will develop a “bulls-eye” rash. This usually happens 3-30 days after the tick bite.



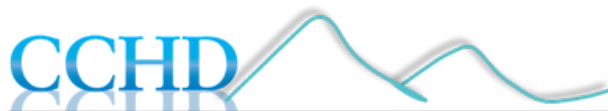


Ticks & your pets

Just like you, your pets can be bitten by ticks and contract a tick-borne illness. Due to the known presence of ticks in our county, pets should be treated with preventive medications or collars year-round. Even if pets are treated, they can still bring ticks into your home. If your pet spends time outdoors, it is important to do regular tick checks. Pay close attention to the head, ears, shoulders and upper leg areas.

The most common tick-borne illnesses for pets in Clinton County are Anaplasmosis and Lyme disease. Symptoms can include: spontaneous and shifting leg lameness; reluctance to move; loss of appetite; depression; lethargy; neck pain; and neurologic signs.

For more health & safety tips, visit www.clintonhealth.org/nchealtheffect or scan the QR code.



Clinton County **HEALTH** Department
133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh NY 12901
(518) 565-4840 health@clintoncountyny.gov



Information in this guide was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, www.cdc.gov); the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH, www.health.ny.gov); and the Canine Health Foundation (www.akcchf.org).