

PETS AND LYME DISEASE

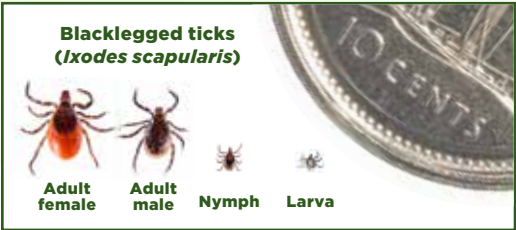
Although pets cannot spread Lyme disease directly to humans, they can carry infected ticks into homes and yards. Just as for people, regular tick checks and prompt tick removal are important if your pet has been bitten.



The most common symptom of Lyme disease in pets is arthritic pain. Some animals may develop fatigue or a fever. Contact your veterinarian if you suspect your pet may have Lyme disease or to discuss appropriate measures to protect your pet.

ABOUT BLACKLEGGED TICKS

Although not all blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks) carry Lyme disease, populations of infected blacklegged ticks are growing. Most humans are infected through the bite of immature ticks called nymphs, though adult females can also spread infection. Tick bites are usually painless, so you may not know you've been bitten. That's why it's important to be on the lookout for ticks and the symptoms of Lyme disease. Get familiar with what blacklegged ticks look like and what their growth cycle is:



Source of tick pictures: URI TickEncounter Resource Center

These ticks live in tall grass and wooded areas, and attach to people and animals as they pass by. They burrow part way into skin, bite, draw blood, and then drop off. As they feed, their stomachs grow and get darker. They grow from being approximately 0.15 cm (about the size of a poppy seed) to 0.30 cm in size (about the size of a sesame seed).

For more information on how to prevent, recognize and take action on Lyme disease, visit

Canada.ca/LymeDisease

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS, WITHOUT A TICK

PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR
FAMILY AND YOUR PETS FROM
LYME DISEASE



LYME DISEASE IS IN CANADA. PREVENTION IS IMPORTANT.

Lyme disease is an illness that is spread by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick. It can have severe and long-term complications, but it's also easy to prevent, and to treat when caught early.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN
REDUCE YOUR RISK WHEN
YOU SPEND TIME OUTDOORS.

WHERE ARE TICKS FOUND?

Blacklegged ticks are most often found in forests, wooded areas, shrubs, tall grass and leaf piles. However, it is possible to be bitten outside these areas.

The following are risk areas where blacklegged tick populations have been confirmed, but as their territory expands, they may be found elsewhere:

- ▶ Southern, eastern and northwestern Ontario
- ▶ Southern Quebec
- ▶ Southern Manitoba
- ▶ Southern New Brunswick and Grand Manan Island
- ▶ Parts of Nova Scotia
- ▶ Southern British Columbia



PREVENTING TICK BITES

Follow these prevention tips when heading outdoors in areas where blacklegged ticks can be found:

- ▶ Wear closed-toe shoes, light coloured long-sleeved shirts and pants
- ▶ Tuck your shirt into your pants, and pull your socks over your pant legs
- ▶ Use bug spray containing DEET or Icaridin
- ▶ Walk on cleared paths or walkways
- ▶ Shower or bathe within two hours of being outdoors
- ▶ Do a daily full body check for ticks on yourself, your children and your pets
- ▶ Put your dry outdoor clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill any remaining ticks (and for longer if your clothing is damp or wet).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET BITTEN

If you find an attached tick, remove it with tweezers immediately. Removing it within 24-36 hours can help prevent infection.

1. Using clean tweezers, grasp the head as close to the skin as possible and slowly pull straight out.
2. If parts of the tick's mouth break off and remain in the skin, remove them with tweezers. If you can't remove the mouthparts, leave them alone and let the skin heal.
3. Wash the bite with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Save the tick that bit you in a sealed container and record the date of the bite. If you feel unwell in the weeks after being bitten, see a healthcare provider and bring the tick with you as it may help in the assessment of your illness.



For information on tick testing and identification, visit Canada.ca/LymeDisease

SYMPTOMS

Most people experience mild symptoms like fever or a skin rash soon after being bitten, while a small number may experience more severe symptoms, sometimes weeks after the bite.

If not treated early, more severe symptoms can occur and may be more difficult to treat.

Early signs and symptoms (typically occur within 3 to 30 days)

- ▶ Rash, sometimes shaped like a bull's eye
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Chills
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Swollen lymph nodes
- ▶ Muscle and joint aches

More severe symptoms (if untreated)

- ▶ Severe headaches
- ▶ Additional skin rashes
- ▶ Facial paralysis (i.e. Bell's palsy)
- ▶ Nervous system disorders
- ▶ Abnormal heart beat
- ▶ Arthritis

Identification of the disease in its early stages is very important. Consult a healthcare provider if you develop any of the above symptoms after being bitten by a tick or having been in areas where they are known to be present.

In most cases, if caught early, Lyme disease can be effectively treated with 2-4 weeks of antibiotics.