Tickborne Diseases in Ohio

Tickborne diseases are illnesses that can spread to people or pets through the bite of an infected tick. To feed, a tick will wait on a blade of grass or a leaf until a person or animal brushes by. The tick will climb on and make its way to the skin where it can feed.

If not removed, a tick may feed for several days. While it feeds, the tick will get larger as it fills up with blood. The longer the tick is attached, the greater the chance it will pass on any disease germs it may have.

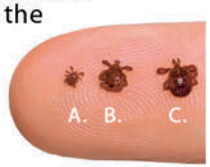
These are the most common tickborne diseases reported in Ohio:

- Anaplasmosis
- Babesiosis
- Ehrlichiosis
- Lyme disease
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever

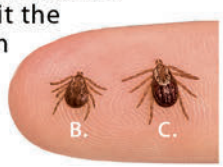
Most cases of these diseases in Ohio are caused by these common ticks:

Blacklegged tick *(Ixodes scapularis)*
The blacklegged tick, also known as the "deer tick" may transmit the bacteria that cause anaplasmosis and Lyme disease, as well as the parasite that causes babesiosis. The risk of exposure to this tick is greater in wooded or brushy areas and along the edge area between lawns and woods.

Lone star tick *(Amblyomma americanum)*
The lone star tick may also transmit the bacteria that cause ehrlichiosis. It may also transmit other diseases. This tick is most common in shady areas along roads and in meadows and woods.



American dog tick *(Dermacentor variabilis)*
The American dog tick may transmit the bacteria that cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever. It is often found in overgrown lots and along weedy roadsides, paths and hiking trails.



A. Nymph B. Adult male C. Adult female

Rev. 04-2018

Protect

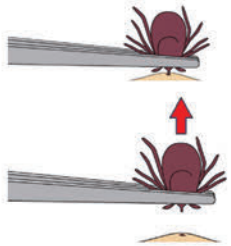
- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 labelled for use against ticks on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours. Always follow the product label. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding their hands, eyes and mouth.
- Treat clothing and gear such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5 percent permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Always follow the product label. Pre-treated clothing is available and may provide longer lasting protection.
- Wear long pants, long sleeves and long socks. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and tuck shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of your clothing. Light colored clothing will help you spot ticks more easily.

Check

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to more easily find and wash off any ticks that may be crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand held
or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in
and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats and daypacks.
- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended.

Remove

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull away from your skin with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth parts easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- Wash your hands and the bite area with soap and water.
- Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish or any other "folk" remedies to remove a tick. These methods do not work.



Watch

- Watch for symptoms of tickborne diseases.
- Symptoms vary, but most often include fever, headache, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue or a rash soon after a tick bite.
- Watch for symptoms of different diseases to begin at different times after a tick bite:

Anaplasmosis	5-21 days
Babesiosis	7-56 days
Ehrlichiosis	5-10 days
Lyme disease	3-30 days
Rocky Mountain spotted fever	5-10 days

- Contact your health care provider if symptoms develop. Tell them if you had a tick bite or found a tick on you, and tell them about your outdoor activities.

Create a Tick-Safe Zone around Your Home

You can make your yard less attractive to ticks. Here are some simple landscaping techniques that can help reduce ticks:

- Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment. This will restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Mow the lawn regularly and keep leaves raked.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area (discourages rodents that ticks feed on).
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees and place them in a sunny location, if possible.
- Remove any old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.

Create a tick-safe zone similar to this play area by using landscaping techniques mentioned above to make your yard inhospitable to ticks. This is especially important when your yard is bordered by tick habitat.

Preventing Ticks on Your Pets

Pets can also be affected by tick bites and tickborne diseases. To reduce the chances that a tick will transmit disease to your pets:

- Check your pets for ticks daily, especially after they spend time outdoors.
- If you find a tick on your pet, remove it right away.
- Talk to your veterinarian about tick prevention products for your pet.

Note: Cats are extremely sensitive to a variety of chemicals. Do not apply any insecticides or repellents to your cats without first consulting your veterinarian!

- Reduce tick habitat in your yard.

For more information on tickborne diseases:

Ohio Department of Health
Bureau of Infectious Diseases
Zoonotic Disease Program
246 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 752-1029
www.ohio.gov/tick

Or find your local health department at **www.odh.ohio.gov** or the address below:

Be TICK Smart!

Ohio.Gov/Tick

Protect • Check
Remove • Watch

Ohio Department of Health