

# Ticks & Lyme Disease

## How to prevent tick bites when outdoors



**Blacklegged ticks** that may carry Lyme disease live in wooded areas, tall grasses and bushes. Protect yourself:

- **Wear light-coloured clothing.** It makes ticks easier to spot.
- **Wear closed footwear** and socks and a long sleeve shirt tucked into long pants. Tuck your pants into your socks.
- **Use an insect repellent** containing DEET or icaridin on clothes and exposed skin. Always be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions on how to use it.
- **Check for ticks on your body,** paying special attention to the groin area, belly button, armpits, head and behind ears and knees. Use a mirror to check the back of your body or have someone else check for you. Don't forget to check for ticks on your children and your pets.
- **Take a shower** as soon as you can after being outdoors to wash off any ticks that may be on you.
- **Kill any ticks that might be on your clothing** by putting your clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes before washing them.

## How to remove a tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Do not use your fingers.
2. Pull the tick straight out, gently but firmly. Don't squeeze the tick and don't jerk or twist the tweezers while pulling the tick out.
3. Once you remove the tick, wash the area with soap and water and then disinfect the area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or an iodine swab.
4. Put the tick in a secure container (for example, a bottle with a screw top) so it can't get out or be crushed and contact your local public health unit.

**Do not** use a lit match or cigarette, nail polish or nail polish remover, petroleum jelly, liquid soap or kerosene to remove the tick.



### If you have pets

- **Check your pets' skin** after being outdoors and remove any ticks you find.
- **Remove a tick from your pet** using the same steps that you would follow to remove a tick from yourself.
- **Ask your veterinarian** about options to help keep ticks off your pets.

### Lyme disease signs and symptoms

Pay attention for signs & symptoms of Lyme disease. Signs & symptoms can include:

- Expanding skin rash (*remember – many people never get to see a rash*)
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Muscle aches and joint pains
- Fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Spasms, numbness or tingling
- Facial paralysis

**Most symptoms** of Lyme disease in humans usually appear between 3 and 30 days after a bite from an infected blacklegged tick. You should contact your local public health unit or speak to a health care professional right away if you have been somewhere that ticks might live and experience any of the symptoms listed.

### Treating Lyme disease

Your healthcare provider may diagnose you with Lyme disease depending on your signs, symptoms and risk factors.

Laboratory testing is not always required to diagnose and treat Lyme disease infection.

Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with antibiotics.

---

### More information

- [Ontario.ca/lyme](https://ontario.ca/lyme)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

