



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Take Steps to Prevent Tick Bites

Canton, NY—As we begin to spend more time outdoors enjoying the warm weather, it's important we remember to take precautions to prevent tick-borne infections.

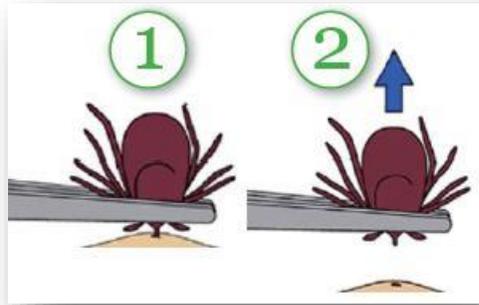
New tick-borne infections have been discovered in recent years and are steadily increasing; Lyme disease is the most commonly reported. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria transmitted through bites from infected blacklegged-deer ticks. According to a 2017 study conducted by the New York State Department of Health, 50% of deer ticks in St. Lawrence County tested positive for carrying the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Most tick-borne infections, including Lyme disease, can be successfully treated with antibiotics especially if medication is started early. Preventing tick bites is your best defense against tick-borne infection.

To protect yourself from a tick bite, you should:

1. Wear enclosed shoes and light colored clothing to easily spot ticks. Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants when walking in wooded and grassy areas or when gardening.
2. Use repellent containing 20% - 30% DEET. Spray on shoes, clothing and hats. Avoid spraying directly onto the skin.
3. Shower after being outdoors. Put clothing into the dryer for 20 minutes to kill any remaining ticks that you may not have seen.
4. Do a daily full body tick check. Pay close attention to the back of the knees, behind the ears, scalp, arm pits, groin area and back. Check children and pets too.

If you do find a tick on your body, stay calm! Your risk of tick-borne infection is significantly reduced if the tick is removed within the first 36 hours. Use a pair of fine tipped tweezers, grasping the tick near the mouthparts, as close to your skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Wash the bite area with soap and water. Check out these videos about proper tick removal and safety at:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/>



Often people are not aware of a tick bite until symptoms appear, which is why doing a daily tick check is so important. Symptoms may include severe fatigue, flu-like symptoms, headache, fever, joint swelling, facial paralysis or rash. Some people may experience a sudden red lesion known as the “bull’s eye rash,” on their body. If you experience these symptoms, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

Ticks are active from April through November, depending on the weather. Be sure to perform daily checks on yourself and your family after gardening, camping, hiking, playing outdoors and other outdoor activities. To learn more about tick prevention, call the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department at 315-386-2325 or visit <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/>.

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