

Ticks and Lyme Disease



LEARN ABOUT TICKS
AND PREVENT TICK BITES
AND LYME DISEASE.



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit

MOST TICKS IN THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT ARE HARMLESS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE DEER TICKS IN THE AREA THAT CARRY LYME DISEASE. ALTHOUGH THE RISK TO HUMANS IS LOW BECAUSE OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF DEER TICKS, THE HEALTH UNIT RECOMMENDS TAKING SAFETY MEASURES TO PREVENT TICK BITES.

What is the difference between a wood tick and a deer tick?



WOOD TICK

Wood ticks are the most common tick in the Thunder Bay District. Female wood ticks have a white hood or shield behind their head. Male wood ticks have a black and brown shell. They are harmless to humans but can be a nuisance.



DEER TICK

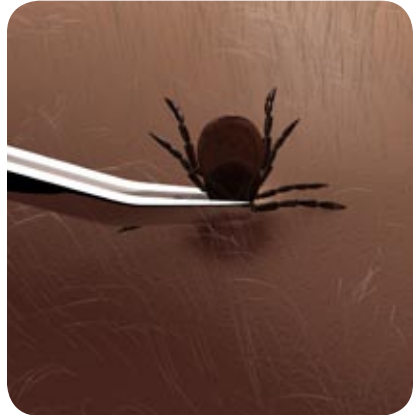
Deer ticks have potential to carry Lyme disease. They are brown or black with no white markings. Females may have a coloured body. Due to milder winters, an increasing number of deer ticks have been identified in the Thunder Bay District.

How can I remove a tick and what do I do with it?

You will need a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, soap and water, some rubbing alcohol and an empty container.

1. Remove the tick.

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grab the head and mouth as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull up slowly until the tick is completely removed from the skin. Do not twist or turn. Try not to damage the tick so it can be easily identified.
- Do not try to burn the tick or use anything to smother it (e.g. Vaseline®).
- Make sure the whole tick is removed.
- Put the tick in a clean container or empty pill bottle. Mark down the date and the geographic location of where the tick bite happened.



Use tweezers to grab the head and mouth as close to the skin as possible and pull up until the tick is completely removed from the skin.

2. Treat the bite.

- Wash the area with soap and water and then apply rubbing alcohol.

3. Bring the tick to the Health Unit for identification.

- Thunder Bay: Drop off at the 999 Balmoral Street office.
- Outside of Thunder Bay: Drop off at the nearest Health Unit branch office.

How can I protect myself against ticks and Lyme disease?

Ticks are very hardy, difficult to kill and will survive without feeding and with little oxygen. If you are planning an outside activity, there are some tips you can follow. These tips are even more important if you are planning a trip to an area with lots of ticks, or if you are out in the bush during the spring when ticks are most active.

- Avoid places with long grasses. If you are hiking or walking, stay in the centre of the trail.
- Wear light coloured clothing to make it easier to find the ticks.
- Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Wear long sleeved shirts that fit tightly around your wrists.
- Keep long pants tucked into your socks.
- Use an insect repellent with DEET on uncovered skin as well as on your clothing.

Follow these guidelines from Health Canada:

INFANTS UNDER 6 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use a DEET repellent.
CHILDREN BETWEEN SIX MONTHS AND TWO YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a repellent only if there is a high risk of insect bites.• Use a product with 10% DEET or less.• Do not put the repellent on their face or hands.
CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a product with 10% DEET or less.• Do not put on the repellent more than three times per day.
ADULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a product with 30% DEET or less.
PREGNANT WOMEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no evidence to prove that DEET will harm pregnant or breast-feeding women. But, these women may want to use non-chemical ways to prevent bites.

- Check yourself, your children and your pets from head to toe for ticks before you go indoors.
- Have a hot shower after checking for ticks, if possible.
- Wash your clothes with hot water and use the hottest setting on your dryer to kill any ticks that you may have missed.



This is an engorged tick. Make sure you check your animals for ticks and remove right away. Use tweezers and follow the method described earlier in the brochure.

What is Lyme disease and how is it spread to humans?

Lyme disease is a serious illness that affects the central nervous system, the cardiovascular system (e.g. heart and lungs), and the joints. Although Lyme disease in humans can have serious symptoms, it can be treated if it is noticed early enough.

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria that is spread through the bite of infected deer ticks. Deer ticks feed on infected animals (e.g. mice, squirrels, birds) and pick up the bacteria. The deer ticks then spread the disease to humans through a bite.

Lyme disease is not spread directly from person-to-person or from pet-to-person by touching or kissing.



Female deer ticks in different stages of feeding. Notice the change in both size and colour. The largest tick is fully engorged after feeding.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada; Photographer: Robbin Lindsay, 2006.

What are the symptoms of Lyme disease and how is it treated?

Tick bites are usually painless and most people don't even realize they have been bitten. The signs and symptoms of Lyme disease are different from person to person.

In a few cases, the first sign of infection may be a "bull's-eye rash." This rash can show up any time from three days to one month after the bite.

Other symptoms might include:

- Fatigue or exhaustion (e.g. being very tired)
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes (e.g. under the jaw bone, in the arm pits)

If the infection is not found, the symptoms could get worse and include:

- Arthritis and arthritic symptoms (e.g. achy, stiff and swollen joints)
- Heart palpitations (e.g. heart all of a sudden beats very quickly, or very slowly)
- Extreme fatigue or exhaustion

Many antibiotics are effective in treating Lyme disease, especially when treatment starts early.



The "bull's eye rash" may be the first sign of an infection. This rash can show up any time from three days to one month after the bite.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about ticks and Lyme disease, please call a Public Health Inspector in the Infectious Disease program at 625-8318 or 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.

You can also visit these reliable websites and search under "Lyme disease" or "ticks":

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE
www.health.gov.on.ca

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

HEALTH CANADA
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

DISTRICT OFFICES

Geraldton

P.O. Box 1360
510 Hogarth Avenue West
Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0
(807) 854-0454

Manitouwadge

P.O. Box 385
Manitouwadge Health Care Centre
1 Health Care Cre.
Manitouwadge, ON P0T 2C0
(807) 826-4061

Marathon

P.O. Box 384
Marathon Library Building
24 Peninsula Rd.
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0
(807) 229-1820

Nipigon

P.O. Box 15
Nipigon District Memorial Hospital
125 Hogan Rd.
Nipigon, ON P0T 2J0
(807) 887-3031

Schreiber

P.O. Box 698
Jack Stokes Medical Building
501 Scotia St.
Schreiber, ON P0T 2S0
(807) 824-2413