

# MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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*Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)  
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**\*\*ADVISORY – Important Information\*\***

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**TO:** School Nurses, School-Based Health Centers, Veterinarian Offices, Wildlife Biologists, FQHCs, Home Health Agencies, Infection Control Practitioners, Long Term Care Facilities, Physician Practices, Hospital Contacts, County EMA Directors, MMA Central Office, Public Health – Required, Public Health Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, RRCs

**FROM:** Sheila Pinette, D.O., Public Health Director  
Stephen Sears, M.D., M.P.H., State Epidemiologist

**SUBJECT:** **Ticks Submissions to Help Track Lyme Disease**

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## **Research Institute Seeks Ticks for Tracking Lyme Disease**

Maine Medical Center Research Institute (MMCRI), in partnership with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC), is expanding its efforts in northern and western Maine to track the spread of the ticks that may carry Lyme disease.

MMCRI Vector-borne Disease Laboratory tracks the spread of deer ticks throughout the state. It has been doing so for more than two decades, creating maps of how the disease is spreading. “Residents, veterinarians, and physicians who find ticks should send them to MMCRI for identification,” said Dr. Peter Rand of the Vector-borne Disease Laboratory. “The information gained through this program can help identify new areas of the state that may be at increased risk of Lyme disease.”

“We encourage submission of ticks from all of Maine, but particularly northern and western areas to better map the location of deer ticks and to learn more about the spread of Lyme disease.” said Dr. Stephen Sears, State Epidemiologist with Maine CDC. “We need to gather more information from Aroostook, Piscataquis, Penobscot, Somerset, Franklin and Oxford counties.”

### **Lyme Disease**

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is carried by the deer tick. Cases increase each year and occur in all 16 Maine counties. Although the majority of Lyme disease cases occur in the summer, the adult deer ticks are prevalent in the fall, so the risk remains present. The deer tick is the only tick in Maine that can transmit the Lyme bacterium. Lyme disease, named after the town in Connecticut where it first appeared, brings painful, often debilitating symptoms, ranging from headaches to joint pain and fatigue.

Lyme disease is a preventable disease. Maine CDC recommends following the “No Ticks 4 ME” approach: Wear protective clothing; use insect repellent; perform daily tick checks; and use caution in places where ticks can be found.

### **Tick Submission**

To submit ticks for identification: 1) Capture the tick in a small, water-tight and crush-proof bottle with rubbing alcohol, and 2) send the tick to the address below along with your name, address, phone number, date and town where the tick was found.

Vector-borne Disease Laboratory  
Maine Medical Center Research Institute  
75 John Roberts Road, Suite 9B  
South Portland, ME 04106

Instructions and a submission form can be downloaded from MMCRI’s website at <http://www.mmcri.org/lyme>. Maine’s Department of Conservation and the Maine Forest Service no longer identifies ticks, so please send all ticks to MMCRI. This is a free service.

More information on Lyme disease can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/vector-borne/lyme/index.shtml>