

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
11 State House Station  
286 Water Street  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel; (207) 287-8016; Fax (207) 287-9058  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

## Stay Tick Free ME Tickborne Disease in Maine

With warmer weather on its way, Maine's ticks are coming out to play. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month and Maine CDC wants to remind everyone to be "Tick Free ME." Health care providers reported over 2,600 cases of Lyme disease in 2022 (data as of March 7, 2023). Deer ticks can also spread other germs that cause anaplasmosis, babesiosis, Hard Tick Relapsing Fever (*Borrelia miyamotoi* disease), and Powassan virus disease. Health care providers in Maine reported cases of all four of these diseases in 2022, with the highest number of Powassan cases in a single year in at least a decade.

### Be Tick Free ME

The best way to prevent a tickborne disease is to prevent tick bites in the first place. Deer ticks can be active any time the temperature is above freezing. Make these habits part of your daily routine year-round to stay tick free:

1. **Know** tick habitat and use caution in areas where ticks may live.
2. **Wear** light-colored clothing that covers arms and legs.
3. **Use** an EPA-approved repellent like DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus on skin and permethrin on clothing.
4. **Check** for ticks daily and after any outdoor activity. Do not forget to check family members and pets too. Take a shower after being out in tick habitat to wash off any crawling ticks that have not attached yet.
5. **Remove** your clothing when you get home and put it in the dryer before washing. Use high heat for 10-15 minutes to kill any crawling ticks.

### What to Do If You Get a Tick Bite

When infected deer ticks bite, they can spread the germ that causes Lyme disease. The deer tick has to bite for 24-48 hours to spread the germ to you. Use frequent tick checks to find and remove ticks as early as possible to stop this spread. If you find a tick attached:

**Step 1: Remove the tick.** Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers. Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick. These products take a long time to kill the ticks. Since the goal is to remove the tick as soon as possible, tick spoons and tweezers are the best way to remove ticks.

**Step 2: Check for symptoms.** Look for symptoms for up to 30 days after a tick bite. Early symptoms of tickborne diseases include:

- Fever and chills

- Feeling very tired
- Muscle or joint soreness
- Headache
- For Lyme disease, some people get a bullseye rash. This is a non-itchy rash that slowly expands in size. It usually has a red center with a pale ring around it and then a redder ring on the outside, like a bullseye. This rash can show up anywhere on your body, not just where the tick bit you. Make sure to check all over your body.

**Step 3: Call a healthcare provider.** If you see a bullseye rash or start to feel any of these symptoms, talk to a health care provider. Make sure to mention any recent tick bites or time spent in tick habitat.

If you have any questions about ticks or tickborne disease prevention, talk to a health care provider. You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or email [disease.reporting@maine.gov](mailto:disease.reporting@maine.gov).

#### **Tick Free ME Resources:**

- **Celebrate Lyme Disease Awareness Month.** Find more information on how to celebrate with us at [www.maine.gov/lyme/month](http://www.maine.gov/lyme/month).
- **Tick Testing and Identification.** The University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick Lab offers tick identification and testing. Find more information at [www.ticks.umaine.edu](http://www.ticks.umaine.edu).
- **Tickborne disease posters.** Find tick posters available to order at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/order](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/order).
- **Tickborne disease data.** Human Lyme disease data available through the Maine Tracking Network. Go to [www.maine.gov/lyme](http://www.maine.gov/lyme) and click “Maine Tracking Network: Tickborne Diseases” on the left-hand side of the page.
- **Social Media.** Follow Maine CDC’s social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). Find short informational videos to share on Maine CDC’s [YouTube channel](#).