



# Ticks

Prepared by the Glen Rock Board of Health

Spring is here! Now that winter is over, most of us want to get out and enjoy the flowers and greenery. However, this is when we must take care to avoid tick bites and how to best spot them. There are several tickborne diseases, with Lyme being the one that is most prevalent in our area. It is important to treat Lyme disease with antibiotics. Untreated Lyme disease can lead to Late Lyme disease, which is chronic and can be debilitating. Babesiosis is becoming more common in New Jersey. Less common locally are Rocky Mountain spotted fever, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, and tularemia.

Prevention is the best way to avoid tickborne illnesses. It is important to stay in the center of trails when hiking to avoid ticks that are clinging to plants. It is best to wear pants and long sleeved shirts that are tucked into your pants. Create barriers to ticks by wearing closed toe shoes and tucking your pants into your socks. You can apply an EPA-approved tick repellent to skin and clothes. Most of these have 20% DEET. If you use permethrin, do not apply it to your skin! It should only be applied to your clothing. Carefully follow the instructions on the labels of all products you use.

Showering after being outdoors helps remove unattached ticks. After being outdoors, check your body for ticks. You can use a mirror to help spot ticks. It is especially important to check these areas: under your arms, in and around your ears, inside the belly button, behind your knees, in and around hair, between your legs, and around the waist. Also, check your clothing for ticks. If the clothes are dry, tumble drying them at a high setting for 10 minutes will kill ticks. Damp clothes must be dried for a longer time.

If you find a tick on your body, don't panic. Ticks must be attached for 36 to 48 hours before they transmit Lyme disease bacteria. A clean, fine tipped tweezer can be used to remove the tick. Grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull the tick straight upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk. You want to avoid causing the mouth parts to break off from the rest of the tick. If this happens, try to use the tweezers to remove the mouth parts. If this isn't possible, leave it alone and allow the skin to heal. Do not crush the tick with your fingers. You may put it in alcohol in a sealed container or plastic bag closed with tape, or you can flush it down the toilet. Cleanse your hands with soap and water or alcohol. A Tick Bite Bot ([https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing\\_a\\_tick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html)) is available to guide you through this process. You should speak to your physician as to whether you should take antibiotics following the bite. This isn't always advised. If you develop flu-like symptoms or a rash within a few weeks of your bite, contact your medical provider right away and be sure to tell them about the incident.

If you have pets, check them daily for ticks. Remove ticks immediately as described above. Speak with your veterinarian about tick prevention products for your pet and a lyme disease vaccine that is available for dogs. Deer are prevalent in our area and may be carrying ticks. Try to plant deer-resistant plants to discourage them from coming into your yard. Fencing that is less than 8 feet is unlikely to keep them out of your yard.

This is a great time of year to be outside. It lifts your spirits and walking is great exercise. Don't let ticks keep you indoors. Tick diseases are easily preventable. For more specific information about Lyme disease go to: [www.cdc.gov/Lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme).

