

## THE FACTS:

# TICKS AND LYME DISEASE



## HOW TO PREVENT TICK BITES WHEN WORKING OR ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS

Ticks that carry Lyme disease live in woodlands, tall grasses and bushes. Protect yourself:

### Clothing:

- Wear light-coloured clothing; it makes ticks easier to spot.
- Wear closed footwear and socks, a long sleeved shirt tucked into long pants, and tuck your pants into your socks.
- Ticks thrive in wet environments – before washing outdoor clothing, put them in a dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any ticks.

### Use a repellent:

- Use a tick repellent that has DEET or Icaridin on clothes and exposed skin (be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions).

### Look for ticks:

- Check your clothes and body for ticks at least once a day, paying special attention to the groin, navel, armpits, scalp and behind ears and knees.
- Use a mirror to check the back of your body or have someone else check for you.
- Don't forget to tick-check your children.

### Wash off ticks:

- Take a shower as soon as you can after being outdoors to more easily find and wash off any ticks crawling on you.

## HOW TO REMOVE A TICK

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Do not use your fingers.
2. Pull the tick straight out, gently but firmly. Don't squeeze it. Squeezing the tick can cause Lyme bacteria to be accidentally introduced into your body.
3. After removing the tick, place it in screw-top bottle and take it to your doctor or local health unit for tick identification and possible testing. Submitting a tick is to assist with the provincial surveillance program and decisions to diagnose or treat for Lyme disease should not be delayed by the wait for test results.
4. Thoroughly cleanse the bite site with rubbing alcohol and/or soap and water.



**NOTE: Do not burn the tick or use nail polish, petroleum jelly or another substance. These methods may inject Lyme disease bacteria into the skin.**

## IF YOU HAVE PETS:

- Talk with your veterinarian about appropriate tick prevention for your pet.
- Check your pet regularly for ticks if they spend time outdoors (steps for removing a tick for your pet are the same as the steps you would follow for yourself).

## LYME DISEASE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Spasms
- Numbness or tingling
- Facial paralysis
- Fatigue
- Swollen glands
- Expanding skin rash (*Remember – many people never get or see a rash.*)



**NOTE:** Symptoms of Lyme disease typically occur 1-2 weeks after a bite (but may appear as early as 3 days or as long as one month after a tick bite). However, if Lyme infection is not recognized and treated, symptoms may occur weeks to months after the original bite.

## TREATING LYME DISEASE

See a health care professional as early as possible if:

- you have symptoms or
- you feel unwell in the weeks following a bite and
- you have been in an area where ticks may live and no bite is evident

Tell the health care professional about your tick bite or where you were. If you were bitten and saved the tick, bring it to your medical appointment for submission to the local public health unit by your physician or take it to public health yourself.

**The earlier treatment is received the better. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.**

## MORE INFORMATION

- [Ontario.ca/Lyme](http://Ontario.ca/Lyme)
- Public Health Ontario [bit.ly/1MetqFJ](http://bit.ly/1MetqFJ)
- Public Health Agency of Canada [bit.ly/1Drr1D6](http://bit.ly/1Drr1D6)

[ontario.ca/lyme](http://ontario.ca/lyme)