



TICK TALK



The confirmed number of ticks infected with Lyme disease has increased in Northumberland over the past five years. Therefore it is important to know basic facts about ticks and Lyme disease.

Ticks are small insects that must feed off of a living host to survive. Lyme disease is spread when an infected tick attaches to a host such as a human by biting it. The risk of contracting Lyme disease increases if a tick has been attached to you for 24 hours or if the tick is engorged, however the incidence is especially increased if the tick has been attached for 72 hours or more.

Lyme disease can initially cause 'flu like' symptoms and may present with a bullseye type rash. It can progress to affect different parts of your body such as your heart, brain and joints.

Ticks are commonly found in tall grass and wooded areas. Avoid these areas to decrease the chance of a tick becoming attached to you, or wear long sleeves, pants, socks and shoes and use an insect repellent containing DEET (use manufacturer application guideline). Showering or bathing after being in high risk areas, and checking your animals after they have been outdoors, may further decrease your risk.

If you do find a tick attached to you, it is important to remove it immediately. During the removal process, the entire tick must be removed and the area cleansed with soap and water to decrease the risk of Lyme disease transmission. Tick removal tools are available at most pet stores. If you are unable to remove the tick yourself, your healthcare provider can remove it for you.

There is treatment for Lyme disease so speak to your healthcare provider if you have had a tick bite or symptoms of Lyme disease.

The HKPR Health Unit will test ticks for surveillance purposes only to see if they are the type that can transmit Lyme disease. They do not accept ticks from the area south of Highway 401 from Grafton East through Cramahe and Brighton to the Northumberland –Hastings Counties boundaries because this is a known home to blacklegged ticks. [Click here for a detailed ON map of Lyme disease risk areas](#). For more information check https://www.hkpr.on.ca/news_items/time-to-fight-lyme/.

The HKPR recommends people identify ticks by submitting a picture through the [eTick website etick.ca](#). This site does not give medical advice but will tell you what kind of tick it is.