

## Devens Tick Fact Sheet (May 2018)

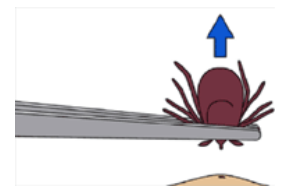


Ticks are insects that feed on the blood of mammals, birds, or reptiles. Ticks are found throughout Massachusetts and may spread different disease-causing germs when they bite you. The most common tick-borne diseases in Massachusetts are Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis. Tick-borne illnesses can be very severe and taking steps to avoid tick bites is important. Here are a few things you can do to protect yourself:

- Stick to main pathways and the center of trails when hiking.
- Wear a hat and light-colored, long-sleeved shirt with long pants and tuck your pants into your socks. This may be difficult to do when the weather is hot, but it will help keep ticks away from your skin and make it easier to spot a tick on your clothing.
- Use bug repellents. Repellents that contain DEET can be used on your exposed skin. Permethrin is a product that can be used on your clothes. Always follow the product instructions and use repellents with no more than 30-35% DEET on adults and 10-15% DEET on children. Never use insect repellents on infants. There are fact sheets containing more information about tick repellents at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/tick-repellents>. A downloadable fact sheet can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/s-u/tick-repellents.pdf>
- Use veterinarian-approved tick control on your pets or talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to protect your pets and livestock from ticks.

If you find a tick on your skin, don't panic but do remove it properly as soon as possible using the following recommendations:

- Do NOT squeeze, twist, jerk, crush or burn the tick. It may contaminate the bite wound or cause the tick mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. This may cause a secondary infection.
- Do NOT use cigarettes, alcohol, gasoline, petroleum jelly, nail polish or other substances to try to kill the tick or remove the tick or cause it to drop off on its own. NONE of these methods will remove the tick because the tick excretes a type of cement to keep itself imbedded in your skin. These agents can agitate the tick and can cause it to force more potentially infectious saliva into the wound.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that you grab the tick with fine-tipped tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Then, slowly and gently, but firmly, pull STRAIGHT up until all parts of the tick are removed. Do NOT twist or rock the tick while removing it. After removing the tick, wash your hands and the bite site with soap and water. Swab the bite site with alcohol.
- If part of the tick remains in the skin after an attempted removal, if the area becomes infected (increased redness, warmth, swelling, pain or oozing pus), or if a red-ringed bull's-eye rash develops, please seek medical attention.
- UMass Amherst College of Natural Sciences operates a testing lab that you can send any ticks of concern to be tested for pathogens. Complete details on the program are at: <https://www.tickreport.com/about>



A tick usually must be attached for 24 hours before it can spread the germ, so look for symptoms: rash or red area, clearing up in the center so it looks like a donut; flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, stiff neck, sore and aching muscles and joints, fatigue and swollen glands). **Talk to your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms.**

**For additional information on ticks in Massachusetts, go to: <https://www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases>. Remember, ticks can also be found in your own backyard. The Centers for Disease Control and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station have also developed a comprehensive Tick Management Handbook that includes tips on how to manage ticks on your property. This handbook can be downloaded for free at: [http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special\\_features/tickhandbook.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special_features/tickhandbook.pdf)**