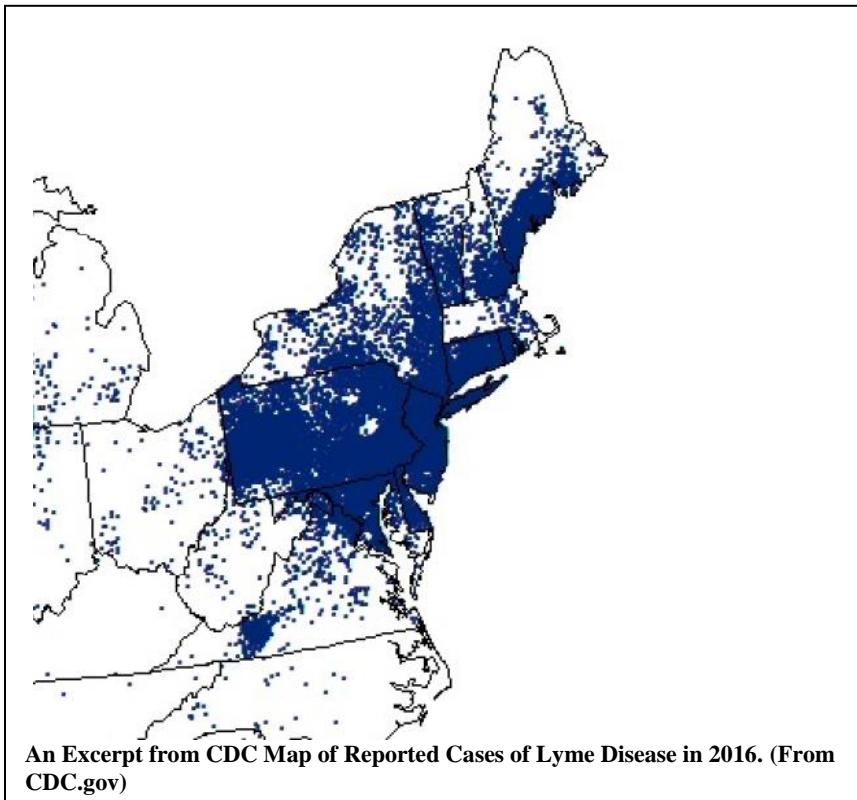


Warmer weather is here again and so are the ticks. Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in Maryland and is transmitted by the bite of an infected black-legged tick (sometimes called a deer tick). The tick must be attached for 36-48 hours before the tick can transmit the Lyme disease bacterium. The tick bite site must be monitored for 3-30 days after the bite to watch for the development of a “bull’s eye” rash. From 2000-2015 there have been 21,833 confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Maryland, while the CDC estimates that incidence may be 10-fold greater due to missed or misdiagnosed cases of Lyme disease than what is reported.

### **Tick Bite Prevention**

The best way to prevent tick borne disease is to take precautions to prevent tick bites. Below is a list of things that can be done to help prevent tick bites.

- Check animals before they come in the house for ticks
- Wear long pants and long sleeves
- Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks to help keep ticks on the outside
- Wear light colored clothing to help spot ticks that have hitched a ride
- Ticks are extremely sensitive to dryness – so when you are done working outside, put your clothes in the dryer for 10-15 minutes on high – **BEFORE**



you wash them. This will kill any ticks on your clothes.

- When applying tick repellent don’t forget your shoes. Ticks attach by crawling – through leaf litter and debris which we walk through. This is one of the most effective ways of preventing ticks from gaining access to you.
- Don’t just spray the outside of your clothing, but spray the inside of pants (bottom 8-10 inches) and shorts. Ticks crawl up your clothing – both on the outside and inside of your clothes – so treat both sides. Repellants like Permethrin must contact the tick in order to be effective.
- Do **DAILY** tick checks.
- Duct tape can be used to “de-tick” as soon as you notice ticks are crawling on your clothes. This is a very easy way to remove ticks. Once they have latched on you may need fine pointed tweezers for removal.

You have done everything noted above and a tick still got through and bit you. What do you do now?

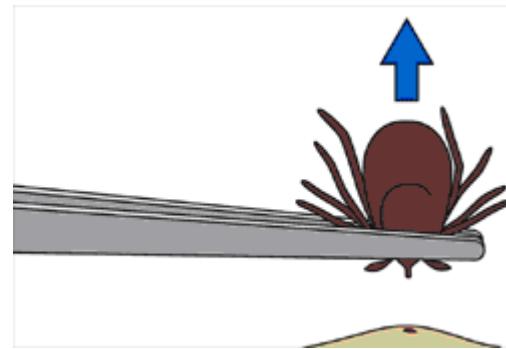
## **Safe removal of Ticks**

(Photos courtesy of the CDC)

Remove the tick from your skin as soon as you notice it. Using fine tipped tweezers, grasp the tick very close to your skin, and with a steady motion pull the tick's body away from your skin. Clean your skin with soap and water. Mark your calendar noting the tick removal.



Avoid crushing the tick's body. If you crush the tick, clean the skin with soap and warm water or alcohol. Don't be alarmed if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick they can no longer transmit Lyme disease.



If you start to feel ill (achy joints, flu-like symptoms, tired), notice a "bulls eye" looking rash where you were bitten days or weeks after removing the tick, make an appointment to get checked out by your doctor. Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics. Treatment is easier the sooner it is diagnosed.

In the end, with a little planning and preventative measures tick bites can be avoided and we can all get back to enjoying the long summer days.

## References

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