

No Ticks 4 ME

The warmer weather is on its way, which means that we need to be using proper protection methods against ticks and the diseases they may carry. Maine had 1,769 cases of Lyme disease reported in 2017 (preliminary data as of 1/16/18). May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month each year in Maine, which is the perfect time to remind you to use “No Ticks 4 ME” when spending time outdoors since ticks are most active in warmer weather.

Lyme disease is treatable and most individuals recover completely with a proper drugs. However, the easiest way to avoid disease is prevention, using “No Ticks 4 ME”:

- 1) Use caution in tick infested areas by staying in the center of paths
- 2) Wear protective clothing such as long sleeves and light-colors to be better able to see the tick
- 3) Use an EPA approved repellent such as: deet, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus
- 4) Perform daily tick checks after any outdoor activity. Taking a shower after being near a tick habitat is a good way to wash off any unattached ticks and provides good opportunity to do a tick check.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is passed through the bite of an infected deer tick. It is most common in adults over the age of 65 years and in children between the ages of 5 and 15 years in Maine. Individuals that work and play outside are more likely to be exposed to ticks. Ticks must be attached for 24-48 hours before Lyme disease can be transmitted, so daily tick checks will allow you to find and remove ticks before getting Lyme disease.

If you are bitten by a tick, or spend a lot of time outdoors, make sure to be aware symptoms for up to 30 days after exposure. Also be sure to call your healthcare provider if symptoms develop. The most common symptom of Lyme disease is a skin lesion called *erythema migrans* (EM), better known as the “bull’s-eye” rash. This usually appears 3-30 days after the tick bite. Other symptoms include fever, headache, and joint or muscle pain.

Lyme disease is not the only disease that can be carried by deer ticks in Maine. Anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Powassan are three other tickborne infections found in Maine. The number of human anaplasmosis cases rose to 662, the number of human babesiosis cases rose to 117 and, the number of human Powassan cases increased to 3 in 2017 (preliminary data as of 1/16/18).

While the deer tick is the only species of tick in Maine that can transmit Lyme disease, there are a number of other species of ticks found across the state. Tick identification is important, especially when removing ticks, and there are tick identification resources available to order at the Maine CDC website. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick ID Lab also offers free identification services and educational references.

Additional information:

- Maine CDC has Lyme disease information available on our website at <http://www.maine.gov/lyme>
- Lyme disease data is available through the Maine Tracking Network at <http://www.maine.gov/lyme> under EPI Information on the left hand side of the page.
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick ID Lab submission instructions can be found at <http://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/tickid/>

- For additional questions, please call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or email disease.reporting@maine.gov
- Tickborne videos can be found on our website www.maine.gov/lyme on the left hand side of the page