



TICK Awareness

Introduction

The following provides information to assist park residents and their guests with identifying ticks, removing ticks, and reducing the risk of tick related injury/illnesses.

Ticks are tiny bugs, which are related to mites, spiders and scorpions. Ticks are distinguished from insects by having eight legs rather than six. They cannot jump or fly and do not drop from trees. Ticks are found in wooded areas, and are commonly found on long grass or shrubs when looking for a meal. Ticks "quest" for hosts by waiting near the top of grass and low shrubs, readily attaching to passing humans or animals that brush against them.

Tick Bite Symptoms

Although the bites may sometimes be painful and slow healing, there is little danger of disease provided that the tick is removed promptly. Lyme disease is caused by a bacterium (*Borrelia burgdorferi*), which can be transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected tick. If left untreated Lyme disease can affect the joints, heart and, the nervous system. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully if caught early (with a few weeks of infection) through the administering of antibiotics.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease include a "bulls-eye" rash which spreads outward from the tick bite (observed on approximately 20% of cases) and general symptoms of fever, headache, muscle and joint pains.

If you are concerned about Lyme disease you should speak with a healthcare professional that can assess your symptoms and ensure that you get the required tests or treatment.





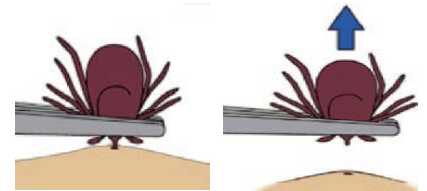
Prevention

There are a number of simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of getting bitten by a tick while outside:

- Walk on cleared trails wherever possible;
- Wear light coloured clothing, long sleeves, pants and closed shoes or boots when walking outdoors in wooded or grassy areas. Tuck your pant-cuffs into your socks and your shirt-tails into your waistband for added protection;
- Use insect repellent containing N,N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) on all exposed skin. Reapply frequently or as directed by the manufacturer; and
- Do daily tick examinations:
 - ✓ Check clothing and scalp when leaving an area where ticks may live;
 - ✓ Use a mirror or have someone help you check hard-to-see areas and make sure you check your whole body;
 - ✓ Check your family pets; and
 - ✓ Check any gear (backpack, toys) that you may have been with you.

First Aid Measures

Ticks are able to lock into your skin when they bite. They can be safely and effectively removed by a slow and gentle pull using fine tip tweezers. Try to grab the tick as close to the head (near the skin) as possible. This will usually remove the tick with the mouthparts attached. Avoid crushing the tick's body. The wound should be treated with an antiseptic.



If the tick has buried itself (i.e. body as well as mouthpiece) into your skin a health care professional should be consulted as soon as possible.

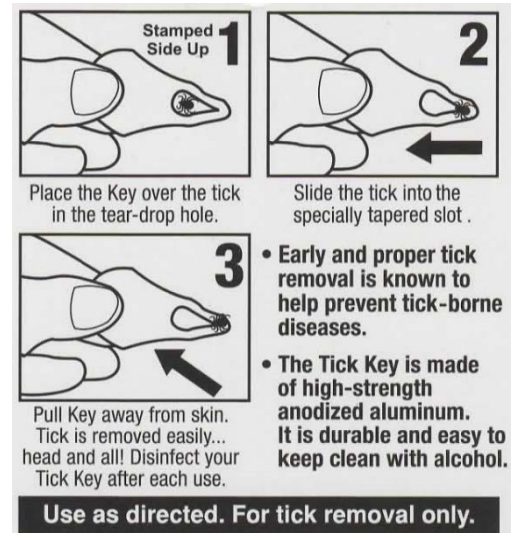
Note the size of the tick, whether it was actually attached to the skin, and if it is engorged. This information is needed as the size and colour of the tick will help to identify the kind of tick it is.

A tick that is not attached is easy to remove or, just walking on the skin and not engorged when it is removed cannot transmit Lyme disease or any other infection since it has not yet taken a blood meal.

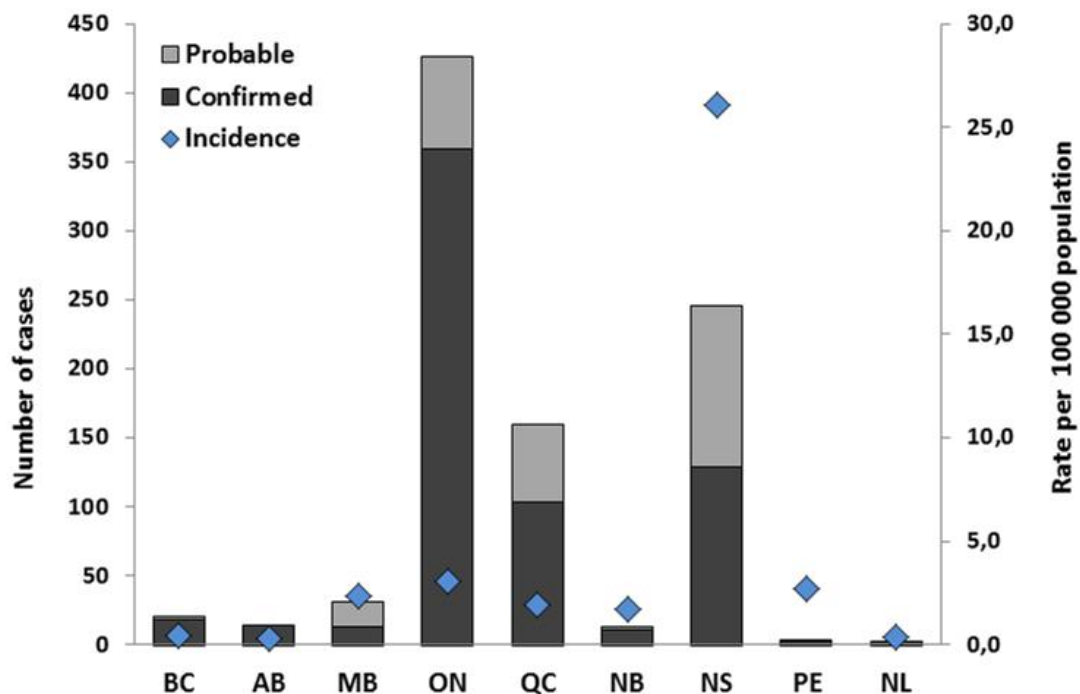
After arriving on the skin, the tick that spreads Lyme disease usually takes 24 hours before feeding begins.



There are various types of devices for purchase that can assist with Tick removal, one of which is the Tick Key. This instructional diagram guides you on how to use the tick key for removal of ticks.



The numbers of probable, confirmed and incidence of reported Lyme disease cases by province of residence in Canada, 2015



Graph taken from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/lyme-disease/surveillance-lyme-disease.html>



Identification

There are many species of ticks but only a few are known to carry the bacterium responsible for causing Lyme disease; in Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Region, the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), formerly known as a deer tick, is most commonly known to transmit Lyme disease.



Other types of Ticks are listed below.



Photos taken from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ticks-ontario-interview-1.4123238>