

For Immediate Release

Contact: Susan Cerniglia, Communications Manager
Washtenaw County Health Department
ringlers@washtenaw.org
734-544-6759

Ticks that Can Spread Lyme Found throughout Washtenaw County
'Fight the bite' this summer to prevent Lyme disease

YPSILANTI, Mich., June 6, 2018 – Ticks that have the potential to spread Lyme disease, known as deer or blacklegged ticks, have been found throughout Washtenaw County. The Washtenaw County Health Department is urging residents to take steps to prevent tick bites, and to send ticks in for identification and testing.

“We have a number of emerging deer tick populations locally,” says Laura Bauman, epidemiology manager at the Washtenaw County Health Department. “It’s time all residents learn the best ways to prevent tick bites, make tick checks part of their summer routines, and submit ticks for testing.”

Transmission season for Lyme disease in Michigan typically occurs from May through August, with a peak in June. There were 10 cases of Lyme disease among Washtenaw County residents in 2017. Two of these cases were likely exposed within the county. The others were likely exposed in other Michigan counties or outside of the state.

The Washtenaw County Health Department recommends the following precautions to prevent Lyme disease:

- 1. Avoid direct contact with ticks:** Walk in the center of trails and avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- 2. Repel ticks with DEET or Permethrin repellent:** Use the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) insect repellent search tool](#) to find the repellent that’s right for you.
- 3. Conduct tick checks:** Examine your entire body, children, pets, and gear for ticks immediately after returning indoors. Be sure to check under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and in the hair. Prompt removal of ticks can prevent Lyme disease infection.
- 4. Remove ticks:** To [remove a tick](#), use tweezers and grip the body firmly and pull straight out of the skin. Do not twist the tick. After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands. Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill any ticks you missed on your gear.
- 5. Submit ticks for identification and testing:** Not all ticks or tick species carry disease. You can now submit a photo of a tick to the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) for identification. You can also send in a live tick for identification and testing by the State. Or, stop by either of the [Washtenaw County Health Department’s locations](#) (705 N Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, or 555 Towner Street, Ypsilanti) for a free kit to mail your tick to the lab. Michigan’s five most common ticks can be [seen here](#).

Washtenaw County Health Department
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705
washtenaw.org/health



Environmental Health Division
705 N Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930
washtenaw.org/health

The deer ticks found in Washtenaw County were identified by the State through tick drags and residents' tick submissions.

About Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged (deer) ticks. The more common and larger dog tick does not carry Lyme disease.

Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a skin rash at the site of the tick bite that may look like a bull's eye or target. Untreated infections may spread to the joints, heart and nervous system. Infections are diagnosed based on symptoms and the possibility of contact with infected ticks. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with antibiotics.

Learn more at www.washtenaw.org/lyme or www.cdc.gov/lyme.

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

Actual Size Comparison **MI Tick ID Card**

Blacklegged (Deer) tick
American dog (Wood) tick
Lone star tick

1 inch
2 inch
Female, Male, Nymph, Larva

Common ticks found in Michigan
From left to right: Blacklegged tick nymph, Blacklegged tick female, Lone star tick female, American Dog tick female

Tick removal tips www.michigan.gov/lyme

- Remove as quickly as possible.
- Use tweezers to grasp the head close to the skin.
- Pull gently.
- Use soap and water, or antiseptic on the bite.

...preventing tick bites

- Use a repellent containing no more than 30 percent DEET.
- Use repellents that contain permethrin on clothing.
- See your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of fever, rash, body aches or fatigue after a tick bite.

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

###