

## Be Tick Smart to Prevent Tickborne Diseases

The warmer weather is on its way, which means that we need to be using proper protection methods against ticks and the diseases they carry. Maine had 1,473 cases of Lyme disease reported in 2016 (preliminary as of 3/1/17). May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month each year in Maine, which is the perfect time to remind you to “be tick smart” by doing your daily tick check, since ticks are most active in warmer weather.

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, watch for symptoms for up to 30 days, and 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 in 3-30 days after the tick bite. Other symptoms include fevers, headaches, and joint or muscle pain.

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

- 1) Use caution in tick infested areas
- 2) Wear protective clothing
- 3) Use an EPA approved repellent
- 4) Perform daily tick checks after any outdoor activity

Lyme disease is not the only disease that can be carried by deer ticks in Maine. Anaplasmosis and babesiosis are two other tickborne infections found in Maine. The number of cases reported for anaplasmosis rose to 372 (preliminary as of 3/1/17) and the number of babesiosis cases rose to 82 (preliminary as of 3/1/17) in 2016.

While the deer tick is the only species of tick in Maine that can transmit Lyme disease, there are other species of ticks found across the state including dog ticks. Tick identification is important, especially when removing ticks, and there are tick identification resources available to order at Maine CDC’s 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](mailto:disease.reporting@maine.gov)
- Tickborne videos can be found on our website [www.maine.gov/lyme](http://www.maine.gov/lyme) on the left hand side of the page