



# News Release

## Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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### For Immediate Release

## Public health officials say tick season has arrived in Massachusetts

**BOSTON** (April 24, 2019) - Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) officials recommend that residents be mindful of ticks while taking part in spring and summer outdoor activities, as tick season has arrived. At this time of year, healthcare visits related to ticks begin to increase and will remain elevated through the summer. This year, DPH will track those trends and post a monthly ticks report [online](#).

Ticks are tiny bugs most likely found in shady, damp, brushy, wooded, or grassy areas (especially in tall grass), including backyards. The most common ticks are black-legged (deer) ticks and dog ticks which are found throughout Massachusetts and may spread different disease-causing germs when they bite.

The most common tick-borne diseases in Massachusetts are Lyme disease, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis. Other diseases that are rarer, but still occur, are tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and Powassan virus.

“Tick-borne illnesses can be severe and taking steps to avoid tick bites is important,” said State Epidemiologist Catherine Brown. “The best ways to protect yourself are to use a tick repellent

with permethrin or DEET when you are outdoors, do tick checks on yourself, your children and your pets every day, and remove any attached ticks promptly.”

Favorite places ticks like to attach themselves to on the body include areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, and neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears. Ticks are tiny and may appear as "freckles" on the skin. Health officials say finding a tick is no cause for panic. A pair of fine point tweezers can be used to grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out with steady pressure.

People should call their health care provider if they have been bitten by a black-legged tick, or have a rash or symptoms such as fever, headache, fatigue, or sore and aching muscles, especially after a tick bite.

Health officials recommend appropriate bug repellents on skin or clothing and remind parents never to use insect repellents on infants.

The Department has also produced a [video](#) depicting the simple steps people can take to prevent tick bites and the illnesses they can cause, and will run tick bite prevention messages on billboards across the Commonwealth throughout the month of May.

For more information about ticks and tick-borne illnesses, visit the DPH website at [www.mass.gov/dph/tick](http://www.mass.gov/dph/tick).

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