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Ridgefield Health Department

Ridgefield, CT 06877

**Blastlyme.org**



# What is BLAST?

BLAST is the easy to remember acronym which represents the 5 most effective prevention measures that YOU can take to avoid getting a tick-borne disease.

# What are Tick-borne Diseases?

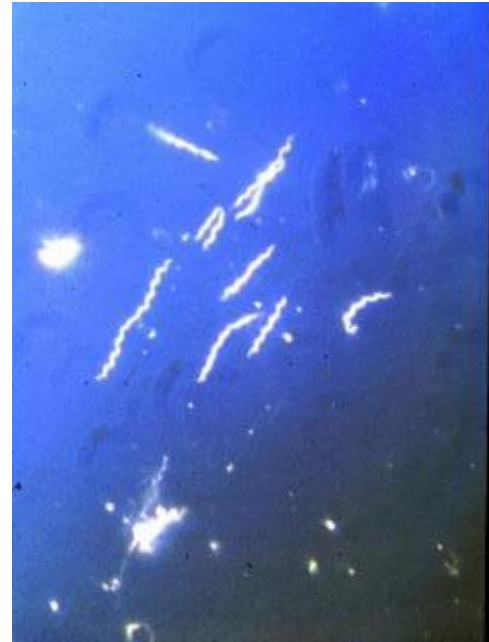
There are many diseases carried by different ticks. In Connecticut, we are most concerned with the illnesses spread by blacklegged ticks (a.k.a. Deer Ticks).

Our #1 concern is  
Lyme Disease



# What is Lyme Disease?

- Lyme disease, the most common tick-borne illness in our state, is a bacterial infection that attacks various organ systems in the body:
  - Nervous System (*Bell's palsy, meningitis, jabbing pain*)
  - Activity System (*arthritis, migratory, joint pain, swelling*)
  - Circulatory System (*heart block, rhythm abnormalities*)



# What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms typically appear 2 – 30 days after the bite of an infected tick.
- Early symptoms:
  - Expanding "bull's-eye" rash
  - Flu-like Symptoms
  - Fever
  - Malaise
  - Fatigue
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches
  - Joint aches



# A rash is very common

Examples of the characteristic "bull's-eye" rash:



# More Lyme Disease Symptoms

Late symptoms of Lyme may include:

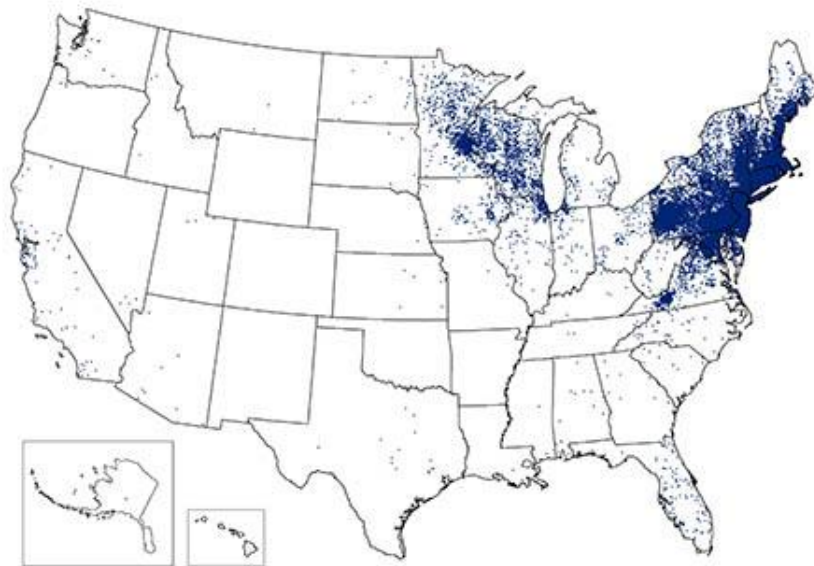
- Nerve damage
- Encephalopathy (brain disease)
- Meningitis symptoms
- Heart abnormalities
- Severe joint pain or swelling



*Swollen knee of a youth with Lyme arthritis.*

# How common is Lyme disease?

Reported Cases of Lyme Disease -- United States, 2015



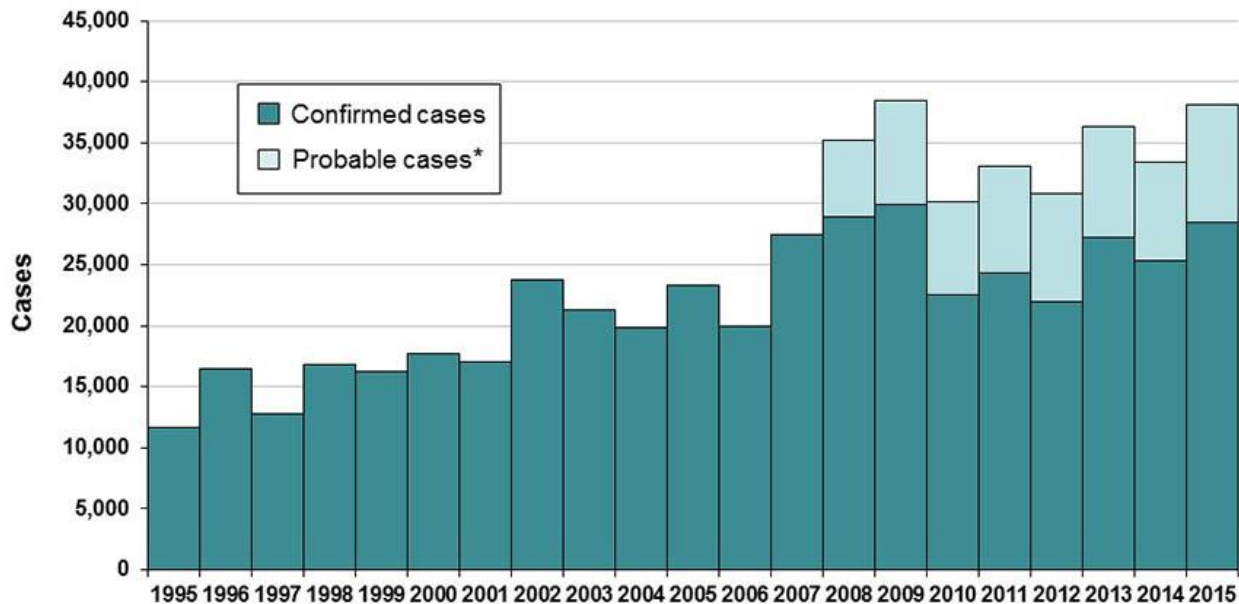
1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each confirmed case

**There are over 320,000 new cases of Lyme disease each year in the US.**



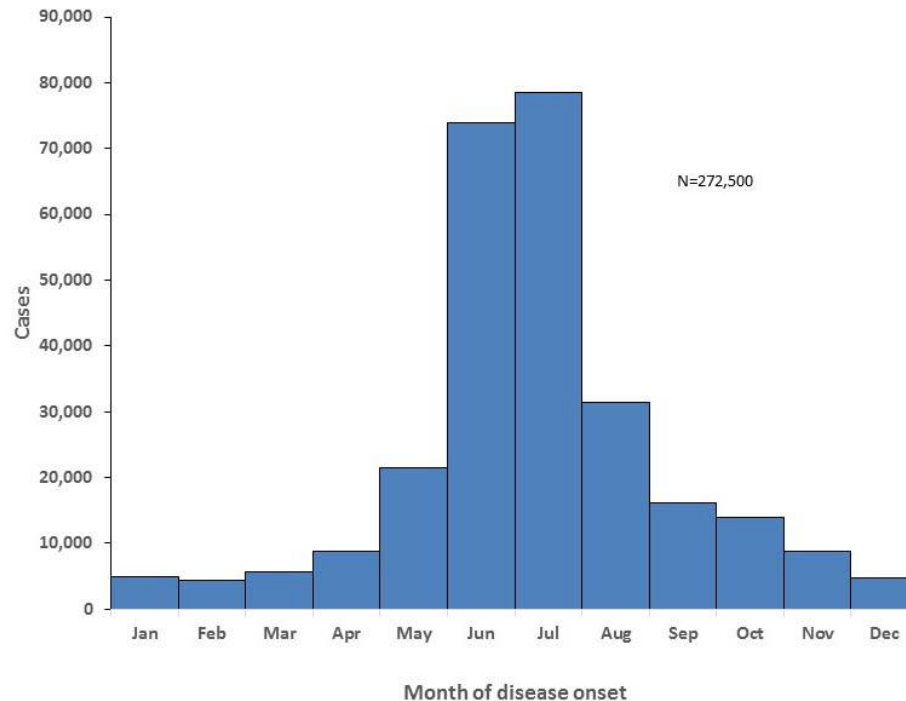
# And it's on the rise...

Reported Cases of Lyme Disease by Year, United States, 1995-2015



# When am I most likely to get bitten by a tick?

Confirmed Lyme disease cases by month of disease onset–United States, 2001-2015



# What do Blacklegged Ticks Look Like?



# It depends on their stage in the life cycle

- Adult Female: Reddish body size comparable to a sesame seed
- Adult Male: Slightly smaller than female, completely dark brown
- Nymphs: Size comparable to that of a poppy seed
- Larva: Size smaller than that of a pin head



From left to right: Adult female, adult male, nymph, larva

Larva cannot transmit Lyme Disease!

# The Tick Life Cycle

**Year One**

**Year Two**

Spring Summer Autumn Winter Spring Summer Autumn Winter

eggs

larvae

nymphs

adults



Adults mate,  
produce eggs & die

**Ticks filled with blood are “engorged”**



# How does a tick give you a disease?





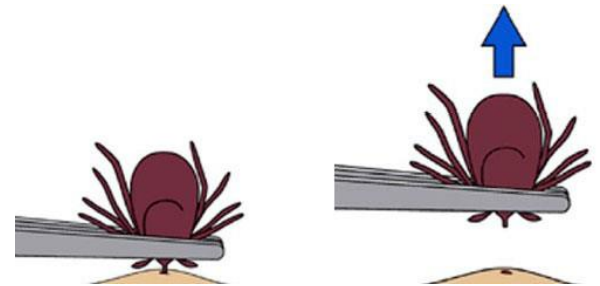
**Ticks attach with a unique mouthpart.**





# Tick Removal

- We recommend asking an adult for help.
- Use fine tipped tweezers.
- Grasp the tick by the mouthparts close to the skin.
- Pull straight back with a slow, steady force.
- Avoid crushing the tick's body.
- Wash area and disinfect the bite site.
- Record the date and location of the bite.
- Watch for any early symptoms!



# Tick Removal DON'Ts

- **Don't squeeze or rupture the tick.**
- **Don't rub Vaseline or Petroleum Jelly on the tick.**
- **Don't rub dish detergent on it.**
- **Don't do ANYTHING that might otherwise traumatize the tick.**

# Bring the tick to your Health Department

- ☐ Health departments identify ticks and submit ticks for free testing.
- ☐ Results will be emailed to you.
- ☐ If a tick is infected, it DOES NOT mean that the person it was attached to has contracted disease.
- ☐ It DOES mean that you should watch for early symptoms and discuss the options with your doctor.



# Where do ticks live?

Ticks thrive in shady, moist areas



**How do you avoid getting a tick bite?**





# Blast

**Bathe or shower soon after coming indoors**





# Place clothes in a dryer to kill ticks

- **10 minutes** on high heat to kill ticks on **dry clothing**
- **60 minutes** on high heat to kill ticks on **wet clothing**
- Washing clothes alone doesn't kill ticks.







**BLAST**

# Look for ticks and rashes



- Tick bites are usually painless, therefore most people are unaware when they have a tick attached to them.



- Do a tick check every night!
- Ticks are very small, and may feed anywhere on the body so check thoroughly.



**BLAST**

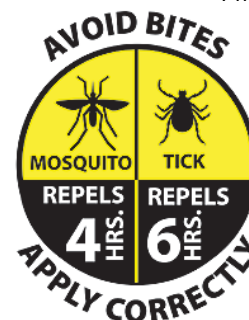
# Apply repellents

## SKIN

If you choose to use a tick repellent on your skin, the CDC recommends using a product that contains *DEET* at a concentration of  $> 20\%$ .

## CLOTHING

A *permethrin* based product is recommended for clothing and gear. It provides great protection against ticks! Spray when not wearing or buy factory treated clothing.



Photos CDC

Treat your clothing with permethrin



Read instructions



Apply in ventilated area



Hang to dry

# Dress for Success



Picture courtesy of Parks Canada



**BLAST**

# Spray and maintain the yard



Westport/Weston Health District

- Spray tick habitat areas
- Clear tall grasses and brush.
- Add a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas.
- Mow the lawn frequently.
- Keep leaves raked.
- Stack wood neatly in a dry area.
- Keep playground equipment and patio furniture away from yard edges and in a sunny location.
- Choose deer resistant plants.
- Avoid feeding wild animals & birds.



**BLAST**



# Treat your pets

- Check your pets for ticks after coming indoors.
- Ask your vet what you can put on your pet to repel ticks.
- Don't sleep with your pet because ticks on your pet may crawl onto you.
- Pet owners are more likely to get tick-borne diseases, so be extra careful when it comes to your own tick checks and prevention practices.



**Quiz Time!**





**B**





**A**



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# Be a LYME Fighter!

Teach your friends and family the BLAST message so they will avoid tick bites and the possibility of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases!





# Information sources include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- CT Agricultural Experiment Station

*Tick Management Handbook*

- CT Department of Public Health
- Westport/Weston Health District
- Yale School of Public Health

*Peridomestic Lyme Disease Prevention:*

*Results of a Population-Based Case–Control Study*

**Questions? Contact the Ridgefield Health Department at  
203-431-7006 or email [blastlyme@ridgefieldct.org](mailto:blastlyme@ridgefieldct.org)**