

## BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATE ON TICK-BORNE DISEASE

Tick-borne disease continues to be a growing concern in our area. In the last year, more than 35% of local deer ticks tested positive for Lyme and more than 5% for Anaplasmosis, the two tick-borne diseases occurring most frequently in the Franklin County region. Only deer ticks (also known as black-legged ticks) can transmit Lyme and Anaplasmosis disease. American dog ticks transmit much less common diseases but also should be avoided. The longer a tick remains attached and feeding, the higher the likelihood that it may spread the bacteria. There's a lot you can do to prevent tick bites from occurring in the first place.

### Prevention:

- Make a habit of checking yourself, your children and pets for ticks after coming inside. When in high-risk wooded brushy areas, wearing light colored clothing that covers skin with loose ends tucked in.
- **DEET (25%)** is the most recommended repellent to prevent tick attachment. DEET must be applied directly to the skin. It is **not** effective if sprayed on clothing. **Carefully follow package directions for application and re-application.**
- **Permethrin** is a spray-on product applied to clothes. Once treated with Permethrin, especially on shoes and socks, there is a **76% reduction** in tick attachment. Clothes should be sprayed outdoors away from children and pets - especially cats. **Please read and follow label directions carefully.**
- Both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Defense (DOD) recommend the **combined use of DEET and Permethrin** as the most effect method to reduce the likelihood that ticks will attach to your skin.

### How to get a Tick tested:

The UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology charges \$50.00 to get a tick tested.

If you have been bitten (the tick was attached to your skin) by a Deer Tick, save the tick in a small, plastic bag. Log on to [www.tickreport.com](http://www.tickreport.com) and follow the instructions for mailing the tick. Not sure if it is a Deer Tick? Check <http://www.tickencounter.org>

### How to Remove a Tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Once you have a firm grasp, pull upward with steady, even force. Don't twist or jerk the tick as you may cause the mouth to break off and remain in the skin.
3. If you do accidentally break the tick in half, try removing the mouth with the tweezers. If you can't, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
4. Once the tick is removed, thoroughly clean the bite area, and your hands, with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
5. Check the bite area for several weeks after removal; if you develop a rash there (or have a fever at any point in that time-frame), see a doctor about getting tested for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

### What Not to Do

There is no shortage of alternative tick removal strategies to be found online. Most of those folk remedies have long since been debunked. A 1985 study in the journal Pediatrics compared several popular strategies (Vaseline, nail polish, and a hot kitchen match) to the tweezers technique described above and found that none worked nearly as well. There are several tick removal devices on the market, but the CDC says that a plain set of fine-tipped (pointy) tweezers is really all you need.

**BLACKLEGGED OR "DEER" TICKS**



**MALE**

**FEMALE**

**NYMPH**

**AMERICAN DOG TICKS**



**MALE**

**FEMALE**

**LONE STAR TICKS**



**MALE**

**FEMALE**

**NYMPH**

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