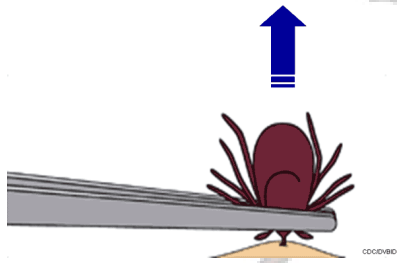


## Prevent Lyme Disease

- **Check yourself and your children daily for ticks** any time you may have been in an area where there may be ticks.
- **Remove ticks as soon as they are found.** Grasp the tick with blunt tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull the tick straight out. Clean the area with soap and water and an antiseptic. Do not use petroleum jelly or a hot match.



The removed tick can be saved for Lyme testing by a private lab, or disposed of by placing in a sealed container or flushing down the toilet. The Health Department does not test ticks for Lyme disease.

- **See your doctor** if the black-legged (deer) tick has been attached for more than a day, or if you develop any signs or symptoms of Lyme disease.
- **Return to your doctor** if symptoms do not improve or if they recur.

**For more information go to:**

**Loudoun County Health Dept.**

[www.loudoun.gov/Lyme](http://www.loudoun.gov/Lyme)

**Centers for Disease Control**

[www.cdc.gov/Lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme)

Images Courtesy of the CDC

April 2009

Loudoun County Health Department  
PO Box 7000  
Leesburg, VA 20177-7000



**Loudoun County  
Health Department**

## Staying Safe from Lyme Disease



*Look inside to find out:*

- *About Lyme disease in Loudoun County*
- *Steps you can take to prevent infection*
- *What to do if you suspect you have Lyme disease*

**For more information, contact the Loudoun County Health Dept. at:**

**PO Box 7000**

**Leesburg, VA 20177-7000**

**Phone: 703-777-0234**

**E-mail: [health@loudoun.gov](mailto:health@loudoun.gov)**

# Lyme Disease in Loudoun County – What You Need To Know

Spring and summer bring warm temperatures, just right for walking in the woods or on trails, doing work in the yard, or enjoying other outdoor activities. This is also when ticks become more active, increasing the risk of Lyme disease.

## What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted by the bite of the black-legged tick (formerly called deer tick) after the tick has been attached for more than 30 hours. It was first identified in Lyme, Connecticut in 1975, and is now the second most common reportable disease in Loudoun County. There were over 500 cases of Lyme disease reported in Loudoun in 2008.

## Black-Legged (Deer) Ticks

Black-legged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) are in all parts of Loudoun County. They are most commonly found in the woods, on tall grasses and on low vegetation, but are also in many Loudoun residents' yards. The ticks typically become infected after feeding on mice.

The life cycle of these ticks is approximately two years, going through the stages of egg, larva, nymph and adult. Nymph and adult black-legged ticks feed on humans. The pinhead sized nymphs are the most dangerous, because of the difficulty finding the ticks before they can transmit infection.



Size of Black-Legged (Deer) Ticks on Ruler  
(from left: adult female, adult male, nymph, larva)

## Symptoms of Lyme Disease

Early signs and symptoms of Lyme disease occur in about 70% of people. They start 3 to 30 days after being infected and will resolve on their own, though the infection does not go away without treatment. Typical early findings include:

- **Rash-** an enlarging circular or oblong (“bull’s eye”) rash called erythema migrans. It is typically at least two inches in diameter with a center that may clear, stay red, or become vesicular or scabby. This rash occurs only about 70% of the time. It typically does not itch or hurt and may therefore go unnoticed.
- **Flu-like Symptoms-** fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes may occur.



Untreated Lyme disease can spread to other parts of the body within a few days to weeks, including:

- **Nervous System-** causing Bell’s palsy (drooping on one or both sides of the face), severe headaches and neck stiffness due to meningitis, shooting pains, numbness or muscle weakness.
- **Heart-** causing inflammation of the heart, palpitations or changes in heartbeat.
- **Joints-** causing pain and, eventually, arthritis.

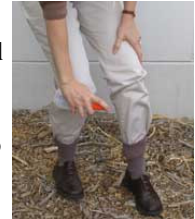
## Preventing Lyme Disease

Ticks do not jump or fly onto people or animals. They typically wait on tall grasses and low vegetation and attach to hosts (such as mice, deer, dogs, and people) as they walk by.

You can stay safe from Lyme disease by avoiding tick-infested areas, by preventing infection from ticks that get on your body, and by receiving early treatment after an infection has occurred.

## Avoid Picking Up Ticks

- **Keep away from areas with tall grass and dense vegetation**, where ticks are more likely to live.
- **Walk in the center of mowed trails** to avoid brushing against vegetation.
- **Tuck pants legs into socks and boots** and wear buttonless long-sleeved shirts.
- **Wear light-colored clothing** so that ticks are easier to see and remove before they attach.
- **Apply tick repellent** containing at least 30% DEET to areas of the body and apply repellents with up to 0.5% permethrin on clothes. Permethrin should **not** be applied to the skin.



## Keep Ticks Off Your Property

- **Create a tick free zone** by keeping grass cut, underbrush thinned in yards, and a clearly defined, manicured border with wood chips, mulch or gravel.



- **Check your pets for ticks** and apply tick repellents.
- **Eliminate small rodents**, such as the white-footed mouse, and their habitats or hire a professional to trap or treat them.
- **Minimize deer on your property** with fencing, deer repellent, or by only growing plants less attractive to deer, such as Achillea, Buddleia, Dogwood, Ferns, Forsythia, Sage and Thyme.
- **Apply pesticide once each spring**, either yourself or by hiring a professional. Effective pesticides are available at your local home and garden store.