

# Town of Hingham

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Town of Hingham Shares Precautionary Measures for Residents to Avoid Tick Bites, Protect Themselves from Tickborne Diseases**

HINGHAM — Town Administrator Tom Mayo and Public Health Nurse Kathy Crowley wish to remind Hingham residents of important safety tips to avoid tick bites.

The risk of tick exposure is higher during warmer months, generally April-September, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Some ticks may carry pathogens that can cause human disease. These diseases may include Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Powassan disease and more. Lyme disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S. and is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and rarely, *Borrelia mayonii*. It is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Blacklegged ticks are found widely across the eastern half of the country.

The Town of Hingham would like to share the following information from the CDC regarding ticks and the prevention of tick bites.

## Before You Go Outdoors

- Know where to expect ticks. Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.
- Avoid Contact with Ticks. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter, and walk in the center of trails.
- Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
- Use insect repellents. Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellents](#) containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old.

## After You Come Indoors

- Check your clothing for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully [examine pets](#), coats, and daypacks.
- Shower soon after being outdoors. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.
- Check your body for ticks after being outdoors. Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Check these parts of your body:
  - Under the arms
  - In and around the ears
  - Inside belly button

- Back of the knees
- In and around the hair
- Between the legs
- Around the waist

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove the tick as soon as possible. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible, and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; as it can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. Dispose of a live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape or flushing it down the toilet.

If you get a tick bite and develop any of the following common symptoms of tick-related illnesses within a few weeks, see your healthcare provider:

- Fever/chills - all tickborne diseases can cause fever.
- Aches and pains - tickborne diseases can cause headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. People with Lyme disease may also have joint pain.
- Rash - several tickborne diseases can cause distinctive rashes.


## **Preventing Ticks in the Yard**

Simple landscaping techniques can help reduce blacklegged tick populations:


- Remove leaf litter.
- Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a 3-foot wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Mow the lawn frequently.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area, which discourages rodents.
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees.
- Discourage unwelcome animals (such as deer, raccoons, and stray dogs) from entering your yard by constructing fences.
- Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.
- Pesticides can also be applied, however you should always follow label instructions and check with local health or agricultural officials about any regulations.

Residents are reminded to take necessary precautions when outdoors this summer and to stay vigilant against any kind of bug bite. If you or a family member are concerned about a mosquito or tick bite do not hesitate to contact your healthcare provider.


For more information from the CDC on ticks and preventing bites, [click here](#).



# Understanding Tick Bites and Lyme Disease



## How to prevent tick bites



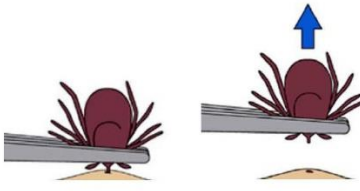
**Ticks can spread disease, including Lyme disease.**

**Protect yourself:**

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions.
- Wear clothing treated with permethrin.
- Shower as soon as possible after spending time outdoors.
- Check for ticks daily. Ticks can hide under the armpits, behind the knees, in the hair, and in the groin.
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.


### How to remove a tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Avoid twisting or jerking.
3. Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.



**Notes:**

- Remove the tick as soon as possible to reduce your chances of getting an infection from the tick bite.
- Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.
- If tick mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

287706-A January 9, 2018



Facial paralysis.



Bull's eye rash on the back.



Arthritic knee.

### When to see your healthcare provider

If you develop a rash, fever, exhaustion, or joint and muscle aches within several weeks of removing a tick or spending time in tick habitat, see your healthcare provider. Be sure to mention your recent tick bite and when it happened, or that you've spent time in places where ticks may live.

If left untreated, Lyme disease can affect the joints, heart, or nervous system.

### Antibiotics treat Lyme disease

People treated with antibiotics in the early stages of Lyme disease usually recover rapidly and completely. The antibiotics most commonly used to treat Lyme disease include: doxycycline, amoxicillin, or cefuroxime axetil.

### Looking ahead to recovery

Rest and take antibiotics as prescribed. Recovery may take several weeks or longer.

Some people wonder if there is a test to confirm that they are cured, but there is no such test. Retesting for Lyme disease is not recommended because blood tests might be positive for months or years after you have been treated. A positive test doesn't mean you are still infected. It simply means that your immune system remembers your infection.

You can get Lyme disease again if you are bitten by another infected tick, so protect yourself from tick bites.



For more information see [www.cdc.gov/Lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme) and [www.cdc.gov/Ticks](http://www.cdc.gov/Ticks)

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**A message from the Town of Hingham**