



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

NICK LYON  
DIRECTOR

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**CONTACT:** Lynn Sutfin  
517-241-2112  
[SutfinL1@michigan.gov](mailto:SutfinL1@michigan.gov)

## **Tick season is upon us – Michiganders urged to take appropriate precautionary measures**

*More than 300 cases of Lyme disease reported in 2017*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is encouraging Michigan residents to protect themselves from ticks as the warm weather approaches. Tick-borne diseases, particularly Lyme disease, are expanding across the state.

Although ticks can spread multiple illnesses, Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tick-borne disease in Michigan. Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted by the blacklegged/deer tick.

The blacklegged tick is well-established in Michigan's western Upper and Lower Peninsulas. However, it is expanding into new areas across the Lower Peninsula. In 2017, there were more than 300 human cases of Lyme disease reported, and approximately two out of three cases reported exposure in Michigan. Lyme disease infected ticks have currently been identified in 34 of Michigan's 83 counties. Information about Lyme disease risk by county is available at [Michigan.gov/lyme](http://Michigan.gov/lyme).

"With the expansion of blacklegged ticks into new areas in Michigan, the best way to protect against Lyme disease is to prevent tick bites," said Dr. Eden Wells, MDHHS chief medical executive. "If you find a tick attached to your body, promptly remove it. Monitor your health, and if you experience fever, rash, muscle or joint aches or other symptoms, consult with your medical provider."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported last week that diseases spread by mosquitoes, ticks and fleas tripled in the U.S. from 2004 to 2016. The report also concludes that Lyme disease is an increasing concern for Michigan. To read the full report, [visit the CDC website](#).

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People can protect themselves against Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases by following these tips:

**1. Avoid tick-infested areas.**

- Walk in the center of trails to avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush and leaf litter at trail edges.
- Protect your pets too! Dogs and cats can come into contact with ticks outdoors and bring them into the home, so using tick prevention products on pets is also recommended.

**2. Use insect repellent.**

- Apply repellent containing DEET (20-30 percent) or Picaridin on exposed skin.
- Treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact or buy clothes that are pre-treated. Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when applying repellents.

**3. Perform daily tick checks.**

- Always check for ticks on yourself and your animals after being outdoors, even in your own yard.
- Inspect all body surfaces carefully, and remove attached ticks with tweezers.
- To remove a tick, grasp the tick firmly and as closely to the skin as possible. With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from the skin. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic.

**4. Bathe or shower.**

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Washing clothing in hot water and drying on high heat will kill ticks in clothing.

Michigan citizens can submit ticks to MDHHS for identification and possible Lyme disease testing, free of charge. Or residents can send electronic photos of ticks to the MDHHS for identification to [MDHHS-Bugs@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-Bugs@michigan.gov). For more information on how to submit your tick and/or photos, visit [Michigan.gov/lyme](http://Michigan.gov/lyme).

For more information about Lyme disease, visit [Cdc.gov/lyme](http://Cdc.gov/lyme) or [Michigan.gov/lyme](http://Michigan.gov/lyme).

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