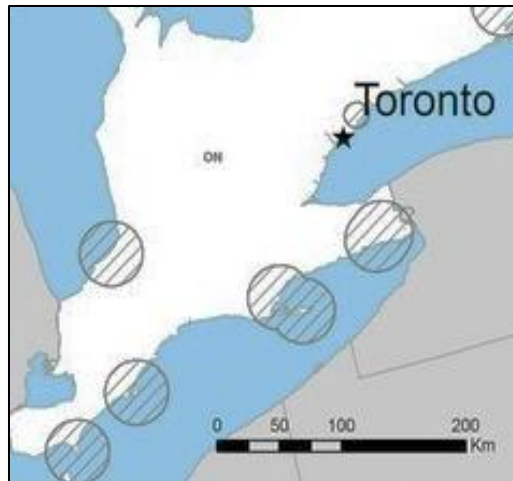


WHAT IS IT?

Lyme disease is an inflammatory infection that spreads to humans through blacklegged tick bites. It commonly infects animals like birds, mice, other small rodents, and deer who then are bitten by ticks and pass it on to other animals, including humans.

Ticks need blood to survive, so they attach on animals and humans to feed. Blacklegged ticks are most often found in wooded or forested areas, in leaf litter or on shrubs and tall grass.



There are five areas that are at high risk for ticks in Ontario around Pointe-Pelee National Park, Rondeau Provincial Park, Turkey Point Provincial Park, Long Point peninsula including Long Point Provincial Park and the National Wildlife area, and Wainfleet bog.

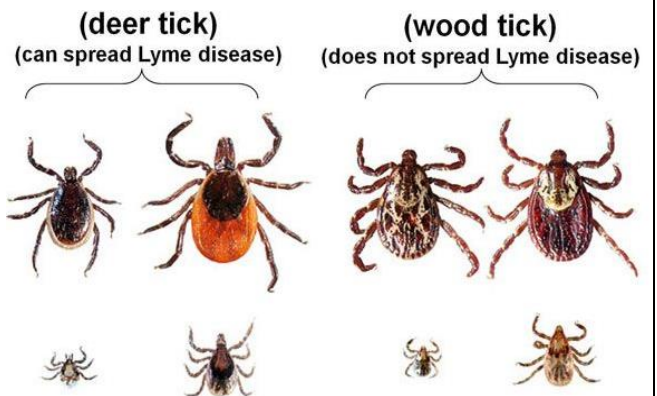
Symptoms of Lyme Disease

Stage 1: Early infection (first few days after infection)

Stage 2: Infection spreads (days to weeks following infection)

⇒ **Early signs and symptoms may include:**

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle and joint aches
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Rash, sometimes shaped like a bullseye (Erythema migrans (EM rash))



Stage 3: Chronic Lyme (days to weeks after infection)

⇒ **More severe symptoms may occur and can last from months to years including:**

- Severe headaches
- Additional EM skin rashes
- Facial paralysis (i.e. Bell's palsy)
- Intermittent muscle, joint, tendon and bone aches
- Heart disorders known as Lyme carditis
- Neurological disorders (dizziness, mental confusion or inability to think clearly, memory loss, inflammation of the brain and spinal cord, nerve pain and numbness or tingling in the hands or feet)
- Arthritis with severe joint pain and swelling, particularly the knees or possibly other joints.

In rare cases, Lyme disease can lead to death because of complications involving infection of the heart.

NOTE: Lyme disease is most treatable during Stage 1. As time passes, both treatment and diagnosis become more difficult.



Rash examples resulting from tick bites

Myth: If the patient doesn't look sick, they can't have Lyme disease.

Truth: As with other illnesses, it's possible to be very ill and outwardly look fine. Very low energy levels, neurologic and brain dysfunction don't often change a person's appearance.



Female blacklegged ticks in various stages of feeding

Myth: All Lyme victims develop a "bullseye" rash.

Truth: Although rashes are common, only 30% of Lyme patients report experiencing a rash, and only 9% develop the classic "bullseye" rash.

SOURCES: Government of Canada, CanLyme, MuskokaRegion.com

How to Avoid Tick Bites

The best way to prevent tick bites is by:

- ✓ covering up with clothing
- ✓ using insect repellent
- ✓ double-checking yourself after potential exposure
- ✓ washing and drying thoroughly
- ✓ checking your pets

Removing Ticks

Removing ticks within 24-36 hours after the tick bite usually prevents infection.

1. Using clean tweezers, grasp the head as close to the skin as possible and slowly pull straight out. Try not to twist or crush the tick.
2. If the mouthparts break off and remain in the skin, remove them with tweezers or leave them alone and let the skin heal.
3. Wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol sanitizer.
4. Try to save the tick that bit you in a sealed container and record the date of the bite.
5. Ticks can be disposed of in household garbage once they are dead; they can be killed by drowning them in rubbing alcohol or by freezing for several hours. Do not squash with fingers.
6. Don't try to remove the tick by using nail polish, petroleum jelly, essential oils or heat to burn.

- ★ Visit a health care provider as soon as possible if:
 - you are not comfortable with removing a tick
 - you cannot remove the tick because it has buried itself deep into your skin
- ★ If you develop symptoms of Lyme disease, contact a health care provider. Tell them:
 - how long you think the tick was attached
 - where you were when you were bitten