

Spring is in the air! It's such a wonderful time to be outdoors with the newly blooming flowers and the not-too-hot, not-too-cold weather. Unfortunately spring also brings out some unpleasant companions like ticks. Below is some information we would like to pass on to help prepare for a safe spring time.

Lyme Disease

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Cases of Lyme disease have increased in Ohio over the past several years, from 45 in 2008 to 270 in 2017. Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans (the "bull's-eye" rash).



If left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, heart and nervous system. Lyme disease is diagnosed based on symptoms, physical findings (e.g., rash) and the possibility of exposure to infected ticks.

Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics. Steps to prevent Lyme disease include using insect repellent, removing ticks promptly, applying pesticides and reducing tick habitat.

Avoid Direct Contact with Ticks

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.

Repel Ticks on Skin and Clothing

- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
- Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth.



The black-legged tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, is the vector for Lyme disease in Ohio.

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. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

