

## NOVEMBER ARTICLE

Ticks don't leave once the leaves fall!

Fall in New England is a great time to be outside. However, it is important to remember that while cooler weather signals the coming of winter, ticks are still active both in the woods and in our yards.

It is important to remember that deer ticks are not typically out in the middle of your lawn, they live where yards border wooded areas, ornamental plantings and gardens, or anywhere it is shaded and there are leaves with high humidity. While removing leaf litter from around your home is a good way to remove or reduce conditions that allow ticks to survive in your yard, it is important to remember that you can be exposed to deer ticks while doing this seasonal activity.

Before heading out to rake leaves or remove brush this fall, make sure you follow these tips to reduce your exposure to deer ticks that may carry disease: 1) Keep in mind: ticks start low and crawl up; they do not jump, fly or drop from trees; they are down on the ground and crawl up until they find a good spot to attach. Tucking pant legs into socks is a good way to keep ticks on the outside where they may be seen or get brushed off. 2) Tick Repellents that contain DEET can be used on your exposed skin to prevent a tick from latching on. Permethrin is a product that can be used on your clothes. Always follow the product instructions and use repellents with no more than 30% DEET on children. Never use DEET repellents on infants. 3) Ticks can attach anywhere, in particular, they will find spots like the back of your knee, around waistbands, under armpits or any other constricted place. After raking or any time after you have been in tick habitat you should thoroughly check your entire body and remove attached ticks immediately. Once attached, ticks do not wash off in the shower.

Thanks to a \$111,300 grant from the Patrick Administration's 2014 Community Innovation Challenge (CIC) grant program, 32 partner towns have been provided prepaid testing of up to 100 ticks submitted by residents. The TBDN partner communities are Acton, Barnstable, Bedford, Bourne, Brewster, Buckland, Carlisle, Charlemont, Chatham, Concord, Conway, Deerfield, Dennis, Eastham, Falmouth, Gill, Harwich, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Lincoln, Mashpee, Monroe, Nantucket, Orleans, Provincetown, Sandwich, Shelburne, Truro, Wellfleet, Winchester, and Yarmouth. The ticks will be tested for three common pathogens, *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme), *Anaplasma phagocytophilium*, and *Babesia microti*, and the results will be provided to residents to share with their medical provider. A \$30 subsidized tick testing rate is available to residents of towns that are not part of the grant program.

To date, 1667 ticks have been submitted for analysis as part of this program. Of these, 20.6% tested positive for Lyme Disease, 3.6% for Anaplasmosis, and 8.1% for for Basesiosis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the following method for conducting a tick check:

Check your clothing for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Placing clothes into a dryer on high heat for at least an hour effectively kills ticks.

Shower soon after being outdoors. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease. 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, which even includes your back yard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:

- 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

For more information about how to safely remove ticks visit [www.cdc.gov/features/stopticks](http://www.cdc.gov/features/stopticks)

For more information about the Tick-Borne Disease Network of Massachusetts and how to send in your ticks visit [www.TickReport.com](http://www.TickReport.com)

The Tickborne Disease Network of Massachusetts can be found on Facebook and Twitter.