Tick-borne illnesses are a serious health concern on Cape Cod

**Lyme Disease** - caused by bacteria transmitted through ticks. An inflammatory disease characterized at first by a rash, headache, fever, and chills, and later by possible arthritis and neurological and cardiac disorders.

**Babesiosis** - a disease caused by microscopic parasites that infect red blood cells. Many people who are infected with Babesiosis are fine and do not have any symptoms. Some people develop flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, sweats, headache, body aches, loss of appetite, nausea, or fatigue.

**Anaplasmosis** - a disease caused by bacteria that is spread to people by tick bites. People with Anaplasmosis will often have fever, headache, chills, and muscle aches.

All of the above mentioned tick-borne illnesses are transmitted by the Deer Tick (blacklegged tick) and have been identified on Cape Cod.

**Tick Identification and Testing**

Order a comprehensive TickReport™ and learn what disease causing microbes the tick may be carrying, including pathogens that cause Lyme disease. Go to www.TickReport.com and click on the I Want To Test My Tick button and follow five simple steps:

1. Place the tick in a sealable plastic bag.
3. Label the bag with the order number assigned by TickReport.
4. Send the labeled tick in an envelope to: Laboratory of Medical Zoology Fernald Hall, University of Massachusetts 270 Stockbridge Rd. Amherst, MA 01003

Results of the tick test will be sent to you in 3 business days or less.

**For More Information About Ticks**

- [www.capecodextension.org](http://www.capecodextension.org) (CC Cooperative Ext.)
- [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) (MA Dept. of Public Health)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (Centers for Disease Control)
- [www.aldf.com](http://www.aldf.com) (Amer. Lyme Disease Foundation)
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises you to:

- Use repellents that contain DEET (20 - 30%) because some repellents that work well for mosquitos, may not be effective against ticks. *Always read and follow the instructions on the label.*

- Use products containing permethrin on clothing and gear only, not your skin. It remains protective even after several washes!

- Ticks can also enter your home after attaching themselves to pets. *Talk to your vet about products to prevent tick bites on your pets.*

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Stay on trails while hiking.

- Ticks can enter homes on clothing then attach themselves to people. Wear light clothing, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, since ticks are easier to see on light clothing. Place your white socks over pants legs.

- Throw clothes in a dryer on high heat for 30 minutes to kill any ticks remaining on clothes, knapsacks, stuffed animals, etc.

- Perform tick checks on yourself and your children after being outdoors. Have someone check areas you cannot see. Small ticks are hard to notice

### Ways to prevent a tick bite

**Where on your body should you check for ticks?**

Ticks generally like to hide in places that may be dark, warm, and/or moist. Places to check are not limited to this list, but may consist of:

- Inside and behind the ears
- Along your hairline
- Back of your neck
- Armpits
- Groin (where your legs join your body)
- Legs
- Behind the knees
- Between your toes

### What about your pets?

For our friends with extra fur be sure to check underneath the coat down to the skin. Use your hands to feel for bumps/lumps that could be attached ticks. Other places to check include:

- Under the collar
- Inside/on/under the ears
- Eye lids
- Lips and muzzle area
- In-between toes and pads
- Genital/Perianal area
- Armpits

### What do I do if I find a tick on my body?

First of all, **don’t panic!** *Not all ticks are infected with disease* and studies show ticks usually don’t begin transmitting Lyme disease until about 36-48 hours after attachment.

- Using a pair of pointed precision tweezers: grasp the tick by the head, right where they enter the skin. **DO NOT** grasp the tick by the body.

*Keep in mind that certain types of tweezers may not be effective in removing tiny deer ticks. Choose fine-pointed tweezers whose tips align tightly when pressed firmly together for precise removal.

- Without jerking, pull firmly and steadily directly outward. **DO NOT** twist the tick out. Do not use any type of irritant such as petroleum jelly, a hot match, alcohol, etc. in an attempt to get the tick to back out.

- Place the tick in a vial or jar of rubbing alcohol to kill it.

- Clean the bite wound with disinfectant.

**Monitor the site of the bite** for the appearance of a rash beginning 3 to 30 days after the bite. Learn about the other early symptoms of tick-borne illnesses like Lyme disease and watch for symptoms. If a rash or other symptoms develop, see a physician immediately.