

One Tickborne Disease

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For years, gardeners in Hunterdon county have been warned about the dangers of tickborne diseases such as Lyme disease. Ticks thrive in the northeast because of ideal living conditions: a cool, moist environment, plentiful woodlands and leaf litter in which to hide and an abundance of hosts such as the white tailed deer and the white-footed mouse.

While not all deer ticks carry Lyme disease, it is important to identify the type of tick if bitten. Familiarize yourself with the types of ticks, and don't hesitate to consult a physician if you are concerned.

In 2014, 94% of all vector-borne diseases reported in the US were tickborne diseases with New York and New Jersey reporting significant numbers of tickborne illnesses, especially Lyme disease.

Scientists are predicting an increase in tickborne diseases . As a result of the increase in the white-footed mouse population since the spring of 2016, there are more infected ticks transmitting diseases. In the northeast, these mice play a major role in infecting black-legged ticks with the agents that cause Lyme disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis, and Ehrlichiosis.

You can take several steps to prevent and control tickborne diseases:

- Reduce direct exposure to ticks by avoiding wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Repel ticks on skin and clothing using a repellent that contains 20% or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours. Always follow product instructions.
- Find and remove ticks from your body as soon as possible.
- Dogs and cats are susceptible to tick bites and tickborne diseases. Vaccines are not available for all the tickborne diseases that pets can get. Pets can still bring ticks into your home, check your pets for ticks daily, and use a tick preventive product on them.
- Reduce tick populations in your yard. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has developed a comprehensive Tick Management Handbook to help create tick-safe zones around homes.

Thanks to Sheila Coutin for her reference: *MRC Public Health Spotlight: "Tickborne Disease"*. For more information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/>

Symptoms, Treatment and Care The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses are fever/chills, headache, fatigue, and muscle aches, as well as rash. Since the early signs and symptoms of tickborne illnesses are nonspecific, patients are often misdiagnosed.

