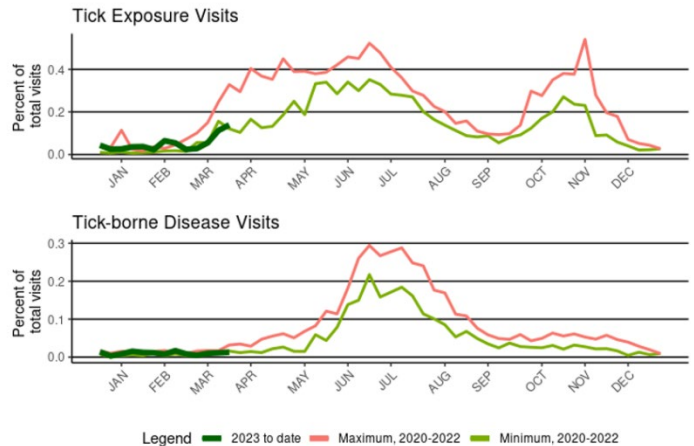


Hello,

This week’s health updates include information on ticks and tick-borne diseases.

Although ticks are around all year in Massachusetts, the majority of tick-borne diseases occur from June through August. MDPH tracks tick-borne diseases and reports trends monthly. The graph below shows the seasonal trends of tick exposure and tick-borne disease visits in Massachusetts. The dark green line shows an increase in tick exposure visits, as of March 2023. To read the report, click [here](#).



Black-legged ticks, also known as deep ticks, are responsible for spreading several diseases, including Lyme disease, babesiosis, anaplasmosis, Borrelia miyamotoi, and Powassan virus. Dog ticks are slightly larger and can spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Lone star ticks are less common in Massachusetts.

Symptoms of Lyme disease typically begin 3 to 30 days after being bitten by an infected tick. There are several stages of Lyme disease, however, treatment during the early stages of infection prevents more serious problems later. The most common symptom is a circular rash (erythema migrans) where the tick was attached, about 7 days after the tick bite. This develops in 70-80% of people infected. Flu-like symptoms, including fever, headache, stiff neck, sore and aching muscles and joints, fatigue, and swollen glands may also occur. Treatment includes a course of antibiotics. For more information about the symptoms and stages of tick-borne disease, click [here](#).

To prevent tick bites, MDPH recommends using bug repellents, including DEET, on the skin for adults, and permethrin on clothing. For more information about tick repellents, click [here](#). In addition, talk to your veterinarian about how to best protect your pets from ticks. The most important thing to do to prevent illness is to check yourself for ticks, especially in hard-to-reach areas, including ears, hairline, armpits, etc. If you find a tick attached to your skin, use tweezers and remove the tick as close to the skin as possible. You can save the tick for identification. Notify your health care provider if you have been bitten by a deer tick or if you develop a rash following the tick bite. For more information about ticks, click [here](#).

BEWARE OF TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

- Ticks are found in shady, damp, brushy, wooded, or grassy areas (especially in tall grass), including your own backyard.
- Ticks bite and spread diseases like Lyme disease, babesiosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

How to prevent tick bites	Where to check for ticks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check yourself, your kids and pets for ticks after returning from outdoors. Stick to main pathways and the center of trails when hiking. Wear a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt with long pants. Use EPA-approved bug repellents and follow product instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside and behind the ears Along your hairline Back of your neck Armpits Groin Legs Behind your knees Between your toes

Signs to look for

Bull's eye rash

Fatigue

Fever

Headache

Joint pain

What if you get bitten by a tick?

✔ DO'S	✘ DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a pair of fine point tweezers to grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out with steady pressure Circle the calendar date and note where on the body the tick was removed Save the tick for identification Visit your healthcare provider if you develop symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply kerosene, petroleum jelly, nail polish, or a hot match tip to remove the tick Squeeze, twist or squash the tick

For more information, visit mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases