

**PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND PETS AGAINST LYME DISEASE AND OTHER TICK-BORNE DISEASES !**



➔ Avoid tick habitats: the woods, tall grass, stone walls that harbor mice and chipmunks and leaf-covered areas.

➔ Always wear protective clothing: hats, long-sleeves and pants tucked into socks.



➔ Use insect repellants on clothing and skin. Always follow the manufacturers instructions especially with children. Never use these products on infants.

➔ Before returning indoors, brush off and shake out clothing. Always check for ticks, even on pets.

➔ Do daily tick checks on the entire body, particularly in the hair, under the arms, in the groin, on the buttocks, and behind the knees.

➔ Remove all ticks (dead or alive) carefully and have them tested. Contact your doctor at the first sign and/or symptom of illness.

ONE OF THE MOST OBVIOUS SIGNS OF LYME DISEASE IS A RED, EXPANDING CIRCULAR “BULLS-EYE” RASH. IF YOU SEE IT, CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY.



**Town of Greenwich  
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**Town of Greenwich  
Department of Health**

# LABORATORY SERVICES

## LYME DISEASE



**Department of Health Laboratory**

**203-622-7843**

# GREENWICH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LABORATORY

**WHAT IS LYME DISEASE?** Lyme disease is an illness caused by a bacterium that is transmitted to humans from a bite of an infected black-legged tick (the “deer” tick).

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND A TICK ON MYSELF ?** Don't panic! Not all ticks are infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Also, the risk of getting Lyme disease from an infected tick can be greatly reduced when the tick is removed in the first 24 hours. Take these steps if you find a tick:

1. Using a pair of thin-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, and pull with a firm upward movement. Do not squeeze or crush the tick. **Do not tape the tick to anything—tiny nymphal ticks may be handled with a moist cotton ball.**
2. Put the tick into a tightly sealed plastic sandwich bag.
3. Wash the site of the tick bite with soap and water.
4. Mark the date and the site of the bite on the bag. Bring the tick (dead or alive) to the Lab on the lower level of Town Hall for testing. Testing for Lyme Disease and Babesiosis. Results will be emailed to you. There is a fee for this service.
5. Watch for signs and symptoms of Lyme Disease during the next 30 days. Contact your primary physician at the first signs of illness.



**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE?** About 50% of all people bitten by an infected tick develop a circular “bulls-eye” rash within 7 to 14 days. Other symptoms such as muscle aches, joint pain, stiff neck, fatigue, fever, and headache may also occur. Since some people never develop the red rash, it is important to note all other symptoms. If conditions go untreated, intermittent episodes of pain in joints and arthritis can develop. In the late disease stage, neurological symptoms such as memory loss or “brain fog” can occur.

**HOW DO TICKS GET INFECTED?** Immature ticks get infected with the bacterium that causes Lyme disease when they feed on the blood of small rodents, such as white-footed mice that carry the bacterium. During later stages of life, these ticks may then transmit the Lyme bacterium to humans after biting and feeding on them.



**HOW IS LYME DISEASE TREATED?** According to the literature, antibiotics can be very effective in the early stages of this disease. If you think you may have been bitten by a tick and have symptoms of Lyme disease, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

**WHO IS AT RISK FOR CONTRACTING LYME?** Lyme disease is endemic in the State of Connecticut. Anyone who works, plays or enjoys the outdoors are at risk for getting the disease. Areas that are wooded and dense with vegetation are likely to harbor ticks.

**CAN A PERSON BE RE-INFECTED WITH LYME DISEASE?** Yes. Having a history of Lyme disease does not provide protection against getting it again. This emphasizes the importance of protecting yourself against ticks: wear light-colored protective clothing, use a tick repellent, check yourself and pets daily for ticks, avoid areas that are known to harbor ticks, and promptly remove and test all ticks if possible.

**IS LYME DISEASE A SEASONAL OCCURRENCE?** The majority of people who contract Lyme do so in the spring and summer months when nymphal ticks are active. These ticks are so small, as small as a pin head — they go unnoticed. Adult ticks are larger and are out during the fall and winter months. Mild days during the winter also prompt ticks to become active. Therefore, Lyme disease can be a problem year around.

**HOW DO I MAKE MY ENVIRONMENT SAFE?**

- Move play equipment out of the shade away from bushes and into sunny areas.
- Keep grass cut short and dry. Trim trees and bushes, rake fallen leaves and keep ground-cover plantings away from yard areas that are in use.
- Create a barrier of wood chips between your lawn and wooded areas. This keeps ticks away from the area you enjoy in your yard.

