

## TICK DISEASES

It's that time of year again. Time for swimming, hiking, biking and TICKS!!!! There are several diseases transmitted by ticks in NJ. The most common ones are Lyme, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, and Babesiosis. Recently, there has been information on Powassan virus. Powassan is a rare tick borne disease with symptoms that can include fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, and seizures. The virus can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord) Many people who become infected with POW virus do not develop any symptoms. There is no specific medicine to cure or treat POW virus disease. Treatment for severe illnesses may include hospitalization, respiratory support, and intravenous fluids.

Ticks are found in wooded, brushy, or grassy areas. People can take some simple steps to help protect themselves against tick bites and tick borne infections.

Walk on cleared trails and stay in the center of the trail, to minimize contact with leaf litter, brush, and overgrown grasses, where ticks are most apt to be found.

Minimize exposed skin, by wearing socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck the pant legs into the socks, so ticks cannot crawl up the inside of the pants. Wear light-colored clothing, to make it easier to see and remove ticks before they attach to skin.

Apply repellents to skin and clothing. Follow the instructions on the product label. Products that contain DEET can be directly applied to exposed skin and to clothing, to help repel ticks. Permethrin products can be applied to clothing/shoes (not to skin), this actually kills ticks that come in contact with the treated clothing, and usually stay effective through several washings.

After outdoor activities, conduct daily tick checks and promptly remove any ticks that are found. Thorough, daily tick checks are very important. The ticks that spread disease are so small (about the size of a poppy seed) that they are easily overlooked.

Conduct a full-body exam for ticks. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of the body. Be sure to check behind the knees, between the legs, between the toes, under the arms, around the waist, inside the belly button, the back of the neck, behind and in the ears, in and around the scalp, hairline, and hair. Remember to check children and pets, too. Remove ticks from clothing and pets before going indoors.

Remove ticks that are attached to the skin as soon as possible, preferably by using pointed tweezers. [https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing\\_a\\_tick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html)

Make your yard unattractive to ticks and animals that carry ticks. Keep grass mowed short. Keep children's toys, playground equipment, pools and lawn furniture at least 15 feet from wooded areas. Create a woodchip or mulch border between your yard and wooded areas. Keep areas under trash, bird feeders and pet dishes, area clean, so it does not attract animals that may carry ticks

Additional Resources can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/TickborneDiseases.pdf>  
[http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special\\_features/tickhandbook.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/special_features/tickhandbook.pdf)  
[http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/powassan\\_faq.pdf](http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/powassan_faq.pdf)

