

Detecting Ticks on Long Island



It's important to be mindful, but not paranoid.
You can still enjoy Long Island's beautiful outdoors!

Tick Species on Long Island

Tick populations across the United States have been on the rise as a result of climate change and habitat destruction. There are three main species that are prominent within Suffolk County, NY. A fourth tick, the Longhorn Tick, is expected to reach Long Island within a few years.



Deer Tick

The Deer Tick or Blacklegged Tick is known to reside at the edge of forests and leaf litter. Adult Deer Ticks typically are only active from September to April. However, deer ticks can transmit disease at any stage of their life, so it remains a threat throughout the year.

Prevalent Associated Diseases

- Lyme Disease
- Babesiosis
- Anaplasmosis



Lone Star Tick

In some ways, the Lone Star Tick is the most dangerous of ticks on Long Island. These ticks thrive in scrub oak areas and the Pine Barrens is ideal for them. Additionally, these ticks are often found in large numbers.

Prevalent Associated Diseases

- Ehrlichiosis
- Alpha-Gal Syndrome



American Dog Tick

Not as prevalent as the Deer Tick or Lone Star Tick, the American Dog Tick is typically a threat from March until August, with June as their peak. These Dog Ticks are most concentrated at the edge of forests and in coastal grasses.

Prevalent Associated Diseases

- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Preventing Tick-Borne Illnesses

What to Do Before Entering the Woods

Long Island has the highest rate of Lyme Disease in the country.

However, even with this fact, it is still uncommon to fall ill to a Tick-borne illness. The best insurance that people have is knowing the best methods of prevention.

Wear Tick Repellent Clothing

More effective than insect repellent, wearing clothing treated with permethrin can kill ticks within thirty seconds.

Note: Tick repellent clothing may not be safe for children.

Remain on the Beaten Path

Those hiking within wooded areas should stay on designated trails as they have fewer untamed plants and vegetation, where ticks may thrive.

Limit Exposure Area

Tuck your pants into your socks and shirt into your pants to reduce your skin's exposure to the traveling tick. If you have long hair, try tying it back to improve the chances of tick detection.

Check Your Skin

Discovering ticks on one's skin as soon as possible is perhaps the best way to prevent bites. While outside, keep checking your clothing. Once home, check all exposed body areas that may potentially have been accessible to ticks. The most common areas that ticks can be found are: the back of the neck, the scalp, behind the knees, armpits and groin area. A good way to make sure that ticks have not reached one's skin is to take a shower. This will help remove any unattached ticks.

While At Home

As White-tailed Deer are often carriers of ticks, creating fencing around one's lawn can dramatically reduce the chances of picking up ticks in one's yard. The creation of a tick-free area - maintaining one's lawn and removing large wood piles - can be a great step in reducing one's risk of tick-borne illnesses.

The Season Matters

Be sure to be aware of the time of the year when certain ticks are active. Deer Ticks are a threat all year long, as they are able to transmit disease at any stage in their life cycle. Both the Lone Star Tick and the American Dog Tick are active from March to August, with June as the peak for the American Dog Tick.

What to Do if Bitten

Rule #1: Remain Calm

- Immediately remove the tick. This can be done by using tweezers to grab onto the tick and remove it. Be sure not to leave the head of the tick behind, as saliva is the most important aspect of transmitting disease.
- Once removed, dispose of the tick by dropping it into alcohol or flushing it down a toilet. It is important to not kill the tick while attached to one's skin. If you want to save the tick to bring it to a healthcare provider, place it in rubbing alcohol or in sealed bag/container.
- Treat the bite location by applying anti-septic.
- If you experience any of the symptoms for the diseases listed on the previous page, consult a doctor immediately. Treatments may vary, but typically antibiotics will be effective, though more serious illnesses like babesia may require antiparasitic drugs. Common symptoms include:
 - Fevers or Chills
 - Aches and Pains
 - Rash
 - Skin Ulcers
 - Any Flu-like Symptoms



LONG ISLAND
PINE BARRENS
S O C I E T Y

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society is an environmental education and advocacy organization focusing on protecting drinking water and preserving open space, especially in Long Island's Pine Barrens. Please visit our website at www.pinebarrens.org for more information about the Pine Barrens.

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