

Lyme disease

Explain dangers

Lyme disease is a serious bacterial infection transmitted by blacklegged ticks (a.k.a. deer ticks).

Blacklegged ticks are parasitic animals that are small in size and difficult to spot. These ticks can attach to humans and animals and feed on blood.

Some health effects that can result from being bitten include:

- Fever and chills
- Fatigue and muscle joint pain
- Rash
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Spasms, numbness, or tingling
- Facial paralysis

If left untreated, Lyme disease can cause weakness as well as damage to the heart and nerves.

Identify controls

- Monitor Public Health Ontario's Lyme Disease webpage. This page will show you where you are likely to come across blacklegged ticks.
- Check your body often for ticks. When checking, look in the following areas:
 - Behind your knees
 - On your head
 - In your belly button
 - In your groin area
 - In your underarm area
 - On your back (consider using a mirror or having someone check for you)
- When working outside, wear light-coloured clothing so it is easier to see ticks.
- Wear the following clothing items when working outside:
 - Closed-toe shoes
 - Long-sleeved shirts

- Long pants tucked into your socks
- Apply bug repellent if you plan to work outside.
- When applying bug repellent:
 - Do not spray directly on your face.
 - Do not spray directly on broken skin, cuts, or wounds.
 - Always follow the product label on how to use and when to reapply.
 - Never spray your hard hat with repellent; it can damage the material.
- Place clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any ticks on clothing.
- When removing a tick, be careful not to squeeze it, as this increases the risk of Lyme bacteria entering your bloodstream.
 - Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible.
 - Pull the tick out gently but firmly.
 - Do not jerk or twist the tweezers when pulling the tick out.
 - Do not squeeze the tick; you might crush it.
 - Once you have removed a tick, wash your skin with soap and water, and disinfect your skin and hands with rubbing alcohol or an iodine swab.

Demonstrate

Demonstrate to your crew how to apply the bug repellent you have on site. Go over the application instructions provided on the label.

Review Public Health Ontario's Lyme Disease webpage to determine if your work area is at risk for Lyme disease: www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Diseases-and-Conditions/Infectious-Diseases/Vector-Borne-Zoonotic-Diseases/Lyme-disease

Discuss the findings with your crew.