

Ticks abundant in New York and region despite cold winter

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Blacklegged ticks are known as one of the disease transmitting organisms for Lyme disease. Credit: CDC

Paul Curtis, coordinator of Cornell University's Wildlife Damage Management Program and associate professor of Natural Resources, explains why tick populations are still high in New York and surrounding areas – and provides tips about how to avoid ticks and tick bites.

Curtis says, "Despite the long, cold winter, [ticks](#) are abundant in New York State and surrounding areas. The persistent snow cover helped insulate overwintering ticks in the leaf litter.

"Black-legged ticks – also known as [deer ticks](#) – do not like dry, open areas and are not common in tall grass. Instead, they are found primarily in shaded sites such as woods or woodland edges, or in shaded home

landscapes.

"Tick densities are correlated with deer abundance, and high local [deer populations](#) have contributed to a rise in reported Lyme disease cases in people and pets. People who are outdoors in tick-infested areas should check themselves closely for ticks at the end of each day. Consult your physician if you are bitten and concerned about potential disease transmission.

"It is very important to remove ticks as soon possible, because they must be attached for approximately 24 to 36 hours to transfer pathogens to humans or pets while feeding. Pet owners should consult their veterinarian, as Lyme disease can cause severe problems for dogs.

"Deer fencing is expensive, but it may be practical for some high-risk areas such as parks and playgrounds frequented by children and pets. The 4-Poster device, a type of deer bait station that controls ticks as they feed, does dramatically reduce tick populations over a two to three year period. However in New York, this device is currently only registered for use on Long Island."

Tick Prevention Tips:

- Wear light-colored clothing with long pants and sleeves.
- Tuck your pants into your socks, and your shirt into your pants.
- Use spray repellents as directed on the label.
- Walk along the center of trails and avoid contact with shrubs or brush.
- Conduct frequent clothing checks, and carefully inspect your body for ticks.
- Once home, dry clothing on the highest temperature setting for 10 minutes to kill any ticks.
- Keep pets from tick infested areas and check them before

entering the house.

- Mow lawns and remove lawn debris and leaf litter.
- Discourage rodents by reducing cover (e.g., wood piles) and food sources (e.g., bird seed, compost).
- Move lawn furniture and children's toys away from the yard edges and wooded areas.

Provided by Cornell University

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