



## MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

Submitted by: Leslie Kinnee, Public Information Officer  
615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702  
989-831-3669, [kinnee@mmdhd.org](mailto:kinnee@mmdhd.org)

[www.mmdhd.org](http://www.mmdhd.org)



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### Be on the lookout for ticks as you head outside



Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- The Mid-Michigan District Health Department encourages residents to get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather, and to be on the lookout for ticks.

Ticks can sometimes go un-noticed if you don't know what you're looking for. That's because the average adult tick is only about the size of a sesame seed and a juvenile as small as a poppy seed. Yes, ticks may be small, but don't let their size fool you; they can transmit numerous diseases to people and pets, with Lyme disease being the most common.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, and a bull's-eye rash at the site of the bite. If not properly diagnosed and left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, the heart and the nervous system.

The best defense against Lyme disease is prevention. If possible, it's best to avoid shady, moist areas in woody and grassy locations, as these are the preferred hiding spots for ticks. If you do need to venture into these areas, walk on well groomed trails and avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush and leaf litter.

Other prevention tips:

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are easier to spot.
- Wear enclosed shoes, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Tuck pants into socks or boots.
- While outside, check clothes and exposed skin frequently for ticks.
- Apply insect/tick repellent containing DEET, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Use tick prevention products on your pets

Upon returning from potentially tick-infested areas, check yourself and your pets for ticks and bathe or shower immediately to wash off and find ticks that may be on you. Ticks can attach to any part of the body, but are commonly found in the hairline, ears, waistline, groin, armpits and sock line.

Prompt removal of a tick is the best method to decrease the chance of infection. If you find one attached to your skin, follow these instructions: Using fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.

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## 2- Ticks

Slowly and gently pull upward with steady, even pressure. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the area and your hands with soap and water and apply an antiseptic to the bite wound.

If the tick is alive after removal, place it in an airtight container with a blade of grass or moistened piece of paper towel and contact the Mid-Michigan District Health Department for further instructions (989-224-3111 in Clinton County, 989-875-1019 in Gratiot County and 989-831-3615 in Montcalm County). Testing of the tick may or may not be necessary; the health department will be able to tell you for sure. It is important to note that dead ticks cannot be tested.

If you experience a fever, rash, or muscle or joint aches within several weeks of removing a tick, be sure to see your doctor. Patients treated with appropriate antibiotics in the early stages of Lyme disease usually recover rapidly and completely.

For more information about Lyme disease, visit [www.cdc.gov/lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/lyme).

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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