

## It's Time to Talk about Ticks

Pike County is a beautiful place to live especially if you love the outdoors. You don't have to go very far to enjoy the many hiking trails, waterfalls, campgrounds and parks. Unfortunately, you also don't have to go very far to pick up a tick. These tiny critters can be found right in your backyard. There are a variety of ticks in our area and each of them can carry different diseases. One of the more common Tick-Borne Diseases (TBD) is called Lyme disease. This particular disease comes from the Blacklegged tick, formally known as the "deer tick".



The Blacklegged female tick has black legs, a reddish brown body and a black marking on its back. It is about the size of a sesame seed and is significantly smaller than the American Dog tick. The males are slightly smaller than females and are a solid dark brown.

Not all ticks carry diseases. If someone has been bit by a Blacklegged tick they may or may not develop symptoms of a tick-borne disease. An infected tick needs to be attached for a period of time before it can transmit any diseases. The longer a tick is attached greatly increases your risk of getting a disease. Early detection and proper tick removal are essential to preventing diseases.

It is also very important to know the symptoms of tick-borne diseases and to seek medical attention if you have symptoms. The following are just some of the symptoms that may appear after being bitten by an infected tick: fever, chills, fatigue, headache, bulls-eye rash, muscle and joint pain, joint swelling, or another type of rash.

Education is the key to prevention. Here are some steps you can take to prevent Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases:

1. Wear light-colored clothing while outdoors to see ticks easier
2. Check the body daily for the presence of ticks (tick check during and after being outdoors)
3. Use tick repellents, DEET, or permethrins
4. Avoid tall grass, hike on wide trails and keep lawn short

5. Treat pets for ticks
6. Use forceps or tweezers to carefully remove ticks attached to the skin. Apply gentle, constant retraction of the tick where it attaches to the skin (not the body of the tick).
7. Seek immediate medical attention if signs or symptoms of a disease appear

To learn more about prevention, symptoms, tick-borne diseases, and tick removal please visit [www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html). Our very own Pike County Tick Borne Diseases Task Force strives to increase community awareness with hopes to reduce the number of TBDs in our area. More local resources and support information can be found at [www.pikepa.org/tick](http://www.pikepa.org/tick) or by contacting the Pike County Tick Borne Diseases Task Force at (570)296-3569.

You should continue to go outside and do the things you love to do, just don't forget to do those "tick checks"! Following the simple steps mentioned above may also help to protect you and your family while you are out in the great outdoors. Please spread the word and educate others. Education is vital to tick-borne disease prevention.