

The Town of Greenwich Department of Health Laboratory



Laboratory Tick Testing Program

The Laboratory Division of the Greenwich Department of Health is pleased to offer a program of tick identification and testing services to the residents of Greenwich and surrounding communities. Information about the duration and infectivity of tick bites is useful for the assessment of risk of Lyme Disease. This program is offered to encourage the public to be vigilant in the detection and removal of ticks, which is the first line of defense against Lyme Disease.

Insects: Any insect will be accepted for identification. Those not identified by the laboratory will be sent to the State entomologist for identification. There is no charge for this service.



Tick Removal: Grasp the tick as close to the mouthparts as possible with a pair of tweezers and move the tick to position it perpendicular to the body being careful not to squeeze the tick's body.

Gently apply pressure in an upward fashion until the tick comes free. No twisting is required. This is the only acceptable method of removal. Do not use heat, oil, Vaseline, acetone or any other substance to facilitate extraction for this may induce regurgitation and transmission of the spirochete.

Submission and Holding: Please submit all insects in small plastic bags. To insure that your tick stays alive place a few blades of grass in the bag. Do not store your tick in the car or near any source of heat. Bring the specimen to the laboratory as soon as possible to get the fastest service.



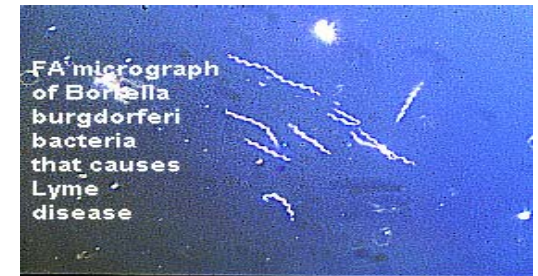
Four Forms of the Ixodes Tick



Larva nymph, adult male & adult female

Ticks are tested by a DNA amplification procedure. The charge for this service is \$41.00 for Greenwich residents, and \$50.00 for non-residents. Results are available in less than a week. Ticks may also be sent to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for testing. This takes three to five weeks, and costs \$7.00.

Testing: Deer ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) may be tested for the presence of *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the spirochete that causes Lyme Disease. Testing is performed on nymphal and adult female deer ticks. Larval and adult male deer ticks, as well as those of other species, do not need to be tested.

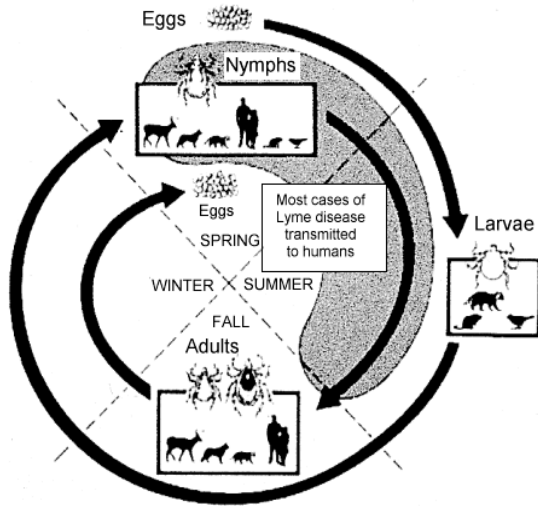


Prevention: Although Lyme Disease can be treated, prevention is best. Infection can be avoided by carrying out simple measures.

- Be aware of typical tick areas (areas of thick vegetation, woods etc.).
- Prevent ticks from attaching to you. Repellents/pesticides, especially those containing DEET or permethrin, can protect against ticks for several hours.
- Light colored clothing will help you to detect crawling ticks before they attach.
- Examine yourself and your children thoroughly at the end of the day. Be aware that ticks may have come home with you on your clothes or on your pets.
- Remove ticks attached to the skin immediately. Infection risk increases if removal is delayed.



Life Cycle of the Deer Tick



There are three stages in the life cycle of the deer tick *Ixodes scapularis*: the larva, the asexual nymph and the adult. All the stages with the exception of the adult male feed on the blood of mammals such as mice, deer, and humans. White-tailed deer are a natural reservoir of *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the spirochete that causes Lyme Disease; they harbor it but do not get the disease. Ticks pick up *B. burgdorferi* from the mice; they are widely dispersed by the deer. The infectivity of a deer tick depends on how long it feeds. The sooner a tick is found and removed, the less likely it is to have passed on *B. burgdorferi* to its host. Deer tick larvae do not carry the spirochete. Nymphs are considered the most dangerous life stage, because they do carry the spirochete and they are so small they are hard to detect. Adult females also carry *B. burgdorferi*, but they are more easily located and removed.

For Details, Contact:

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