



**L-R: The life cycle of the deer tick; Mosquito.Buzz Brockville keeping your yard clean can help reduce tick populations; Different life stages of deer ticks**

# PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES FROM TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

By Lorraine Payette

Everyone knows it is always better to be safe than sorry, and you can make your summer fun and safer by avoiding Lyme disease.

“Reported increases in Blacklegged Tick populations, commonly referred to as ‘deer ticks’, which are responsible for carrying and transmitting the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, have been identified in our region,” said Chief Operating Officer Jordan Lavin, C.F.E. “This is a serious health risk for adults,

children and pets. We should all be aware and protect ourselves against the dangers.”

Ticks become active at temperatures above 4°C, and the deer tick is no exception. Known for carrying the spirochete bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* which causes Lyme disease, they are about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. The disease was first recognized in Lyme and Old Lyme, Connecticut, in 1975, and had originally been thought to be juvenile arthritis. Willy Burgdorfer, a researcher at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, confirmed it as a tick borne disease when he discovered the bacteria in deer ticks.

Lyme disease can have serious effects on people and pets. Symptoms can be varied, and may differ widely from person to person. A person may suffer from one or a combination of these symptoms: skin rash, dizziness, headache, abnormal heartbeat, fever or chills, muscle and joint pain, fatigue (constant extreme tiredness), paralysis, spasms

or weakness, mental confusion, numbness or tingling, nervous system disorders, or swollen lymph nodes.<sup>1</sup>

Prevention of the disease is best accomplished by becoming aware of the ticks and knowing how to avoid being bitten by them. Recommended steps to help minimize their presence in and around your yard include mowing the grass frequently; removing leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn; restricting the use of groundcover in areas frequented by family and roaming pets; removing brush and leaves around stonewalls and wood piles; discouraging rodent activity; and cleaning up and sealing stonewalls and small openings around the home.<sup>2</sup>

Start a “buddy check” system for yourself and your family members for ticks when you come in from outside, and make sure to look everywhere on your body. Wearing light coloured clothing can make them easier to see, and a quick shower can help remove ticks that may not yet be attached to you. A hot dryer can quickly kill any ticks that may be on clothing that has been worn outside.

“It is important to know that not all ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease,” says the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit. “Lyme disease transmission depends on the length of time the infected tick is attached. Ticks that are removed quickly and have been attached for less than 24 hours are not likely to transfer the bacteria. However, if the tick has been attached for longer than 24 hours you may be at an increased risk and it is recommended that you consult your health care provider. If you find a tick on your body, check to see if it is flat or fat. A fat tick is an indication that it has been feeding for a longer period of time and you should provide this information to your health care provider.

“Tick specimens are not used for diagnosis of disease and are not accepted at our Health Unit.” **LH**

**Editor’s Note:** *This is a particular disease that for families and people that live in areas where ticks could fester it is the utmost importance to protect yourself. There are local companies that you can contact like Mosquito.Buzz Brockville (613-499-9476 [www.mosquito.buzz/brockville](http://www.mosquito.buzz/brockville)) that can provide a quote and come and protect your backyard or cottage property from mosquitos to ticks. St. Lawrence Pest Control (613-246-3447 [www.slpestcontrol.com](http://www.slpestcontrol.com)) they can help with other insects or outdoor animals that invade your property.*

<sup>1</sup> From <https://www.mosquito.buzz/lyme-disease> <sup>2</sup> From <https://www.mosquito.buzz/tick-management>