

# MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Walter Ang | Communications Specialist  
wang@eriecountypa.gov

## How to prevent tick bites



From left: Adult female blacklegged tick or deer tick, on a blade of grass; a poppy seed muffin with five blacklegged ticks to show relative size; and two adult female blacklegged ticks on a hiking boot. All photos from <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/gallery/index.html>.

Erie, PA — The Erie County Department of Health (ECDH) reminds the public that as the weather begins to warm up, deer ticks start becoming active. Tick bites can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is the most prevalent tickborne illness within Erie County. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint aches, and a "bullseye"-type rash in the majority of cases. If untreated, additional symptoms can include weakness of facial muscles, arthritis, heart palpitations, nerve pain or severe headaches.

Black-legged ticks or deer ticks are the size of poppy seeds. Due to their small size, they are often undetected. However, Erie County residents can continue to enjoy the outdoors by taking the following precautions using the T.I.C.K. reminder:

- **Treat clothes and shoes with permethrin insecticide.** Permethrin remains effective through several washes.
- **Insect repellent.** Use skin repellents with DEET or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Natural repellents may not work as effectively or may require additional applications. Check manufacturer's instructions.
- **Check for ticks.** Take extra precaution in wooded or brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in center of trails. Before returning indoors, check your entire body using mirrors for tough-to-see places. Ticks often attach to warm, dark areas, including under the arms, in and around the ears, behind the knees, around the hairline, around the waistline and between the legs. Place clothes in dryer and tumble dry.

- **Keep** watch for signs and symptoms of tickborne illnesses. If you develop symptoms within several weeks of a tick bite, contact your healthcare provider.

If you are bit by a tick, remove the tick as soon as possible by using tweezers to pull firmly on the head of the tick in a steady, upward direction. Clean the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

Erie County Department of Health offers free tick identification. To bring in a tick for identification, place in a plastic bag and bring to 606 W. Second St. from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Call 814-451-6740 for details.

Additional information about tick-borne illnesses in the state can be found at the Pennsylvania Department of Health website [Health.pa.gov](http://Health.pa.gov).

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