

## Ticks And Tick Borne Illness In Massachusetts

Multiple species of ticks are reported every year.<sup>1</sup> The three most common in Massachusetts are the black legged (deer) tick, the dog tick and the Lone Star tick. Tick activity can occur all year around and they are most often found in shady damp areas like woods, tall grass, and brush. Most wooded areas in Massachusetts are at high risk for the exposure to ticks including Hopkinton. Ticks feed on the blood of multiple species of mammals including humans. This exposure, can cause the spread of multiple diseases in humans including but not limited to, Lyme disease, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis which are 3 of the top 5 reportable infectious diseases in Hopkinton.

Getting outdoors and using these trails can be very enjoyable and great for your health. Don't let the ticks spoil your fun. Follow these precautions and stay safe!

1. Massachusetts Department of Public Health

## Don't forget your pets!

Pets can't spread tickborne illness, but they can carry infected ticks into the home. Regular checks for ticks and prompt removal for attached ticks is just as important. Dogs can be very susceptible to tickborne diseases and typically not vaccinated for all of them. Contact your veterinarian regarding products available to prevent tick bites.

## Resources

Centers for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>

Tick Report: Laboratory of Medical Zoology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (Tick Testing Service)

<https://www.tickreport.com/>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.mass.gov/tick-borne-diseases>



## Be On Alert And Check For Ticks!

## Tick Bite Awareness Guide For Hikers Using Hopkinton Trails

Brought to you by  
the Hopkinton Board  
of Health and  
Hopkinton Trails Club



## Reduce Your Risk

The best way to prevent tick borne illness is to avoid being bitten. Here are some tips to reduce your exposure.

### Prevent:



Use bug spray that contains EPA registered ingredients like DEET or Picardin.

Wear light colored pants and long sleeve shirts. Tuck your pants into socks and shirt into pants.



Wear treated clothing with Permethrin. (Always follow directions for application)

Stay on designated paths and avoid tall grass and brush.



## What To Look For

### Adult Black Legged or Deer Tick



Image Source: CDC/Dr. Michael L. Levin - From Public Health Image Library

Both the adult and nymph (young) stages can bite and infect their hosts. The adult is the size of a sesame seed and the nymphs are the size of a poppy seed. The highest risk to be bitten is during the spring, summer, and fall seasons.

### Adult Dog Tick



Image Source: CDC/Gary O. Maupin - From Public Health Image Library

Only the adults have been known to bite humans and are about the size of a watermelon seed. The highest risk of bite is during the spring and summer seasons.

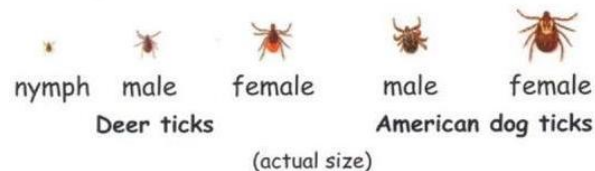
### Adult Lone Star Tick



Image Source: CDC/Loffis, et al - From Public Health Image Library

These ticks are not as common but have been found in along the southern coast of Massachusetts. All three stages of adult, nymph, and larvae can bite humans and are known to be aggressive. The greatest risk of bites to humans are from early spring to late fall.

Tick ID from Massachusetts Department



## Reduce Your Risk

After enjoying the outdoors here are some more tips to reduce exposure.

### Check:

- Check yourself over for the presence of ticks. Ticks like to go on in areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, and neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears.
- Shower or bathe within two hours of coming indoors.
- Put clothes in dryer for 10 minutes at high heat.

### If you find a tick attached:

- Immediately remove attached ticks with clean fine pointed tweezers and grasp the tick's head as close as possible to your skin. Slowly pull it straight out.
- Do not apply kerosene, petroleum jelly, nail polish, or a hot match tip to remove the tick
- After removal wash the bite area thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Notate the date of bite and save tick in a plastic baggie or for potential testing.
- Talk to your health care provider if you develop a rash at the site of the bite and/or have symptoms such as fever, headache, fatigue, or sore and aching muscles.