

Tick Identification and Testing

Do all ticks transmit Lyme disease to humans?

No. In Ontario Lyme disease can be spread through the bite of an infected **blacklegged tick** or **western blacklegged tick**.

What kind of ticks are found in our region?

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Male Dog Tick</u></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Female Dog Tick</u></p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Does not transmit Lyme disease</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Does not transmit Lyme disease</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Male Blacklegged Tick</u></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Female Blacklegged Tick</u></p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Adult male blacklegged ticks are capable of carrying the bacterium that causes Lyme disease (<i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i>), however it has not yet been determined if the male is capable of transmitting the bacteria to humans.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Can transmit Lyme Disease to humans</p>

What are high risk areas known for blacklegged ticks?

Although, it is possible to acquire a blacklegged tick anywhere, risk areas vary across the province. Please visit Public Health Ontario (PHO)'s [risk map](#) to identify known high risk areas.

How do I submit a tick?

There are two ways a healthcare provider can submit a tick:

- 1) Through the PHO Laboratory using their [submission form](#)
 - Results are forwarded directly to the health care provider
 - Timeline: Results can take up to 21 days for identification by PHO laboratory, and up to six months for samples forwarded to National Microbiology Laboratory (NML)*
- 2) Drop-off at the Middlesex-London Health Unit located at 50 King Street (London) or 51 Front Street (Strathroy) using our [submission form](#)
 - Results are forwarded to the exposed individual listed on the submission form
 - If a health care provider requests copies of results, please provide relevant contact information
 - Timeline: two to three business days for identification. Only blacklegged ticks found on humans are forwarded to the PHO laboratory and/or the NML*

* Varies by time of the year. Peak periods are May-July and Oct-Nov. Identification is intended for local surveillance only (i.e. to analyze tick activity in a set geographical area) and not for clinical purposes or diagnoses. Clinical management is at the discretion of health care provider. More information about diagnosis and management can be found [here](#).

Will all ticks be tested?

No. Only blacklegged ticks that have been recovered from a human host will be sent to the PHO laboratory. Ticks found in the environment, on pets, or on furniture/floors are not sent to the PHO laboratory. If a patient wants a tick found on an animal tested, they should contact a local veterinarian.

If tick is identified as a blacklegged tick, it is sent for testing through the NML in Winnipeg to determine if it carries the bacterium (*Borrelia burgdorferi*), capable of transmitting Lyme disease. For more information regarding tick testing in Ontario, visit: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Tick_testing_submission_FAQ.pdf

What is the role of local public health in tick identification and testing?

- Tick surveillance
- Collection of case details (i.e. signs & symptoms, exposure location, etc.)
- Education and health promotion
- Data analysis on locally acquired cases

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