

Preventing Lyme Disease in Recreational Camp Settings

The Blacklegged tick (formerly Deer tick) is now established in Michigan's western shoreline communities. These ticks are potential vectors of Lyme disease and other illnesses. The ticks are active during the summer months when tourism and camp activities in the area are highest. There are several ways to prevent ticks from becoming a problem for your campers and staff, and to prevent Lyme disease illness.

Be Aware

Knowing that ticks are present in the environment and how to avoid them is an important first step:

- Post informational placards/posters and trail-head signs alerting staff and campers.
- Train staff to identify ticks, and the proper way to remove them.
- When campers and staff arrive, incorporate tick awareness into safety and health briefs.

Go to www.michigan.gov/lymedisease for up-to-date information on tick distribution

Staff and Camper Personal Protection

Being aware that ticks may be in your environment is a great first step, but if you do happen to encounter them, it will not keep them from biting. Here are some recommendations to keep ticks off your skin:

- Require campers to have an [EPA approved insect repellent](#). DEET (20%-30%) is the repellent recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to repel ticks.
- Do Not simply suggest or recommend that campers wear repellent when recreating in wooded environments (and this means even walking trails to the beach) – watch them apply the repellent to their skin.
- Wearing long pants with pant legs tucked into socks will help keep ticks from attaching to the skin. Pants can also be treated with approved repellents such as permethrin (which also kills ticks). While effective, this can be hard to follow when temperatures are high.

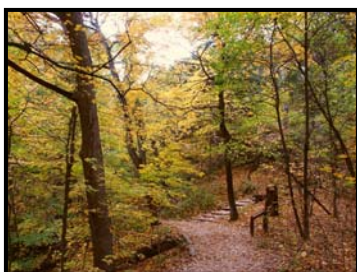


- Perform frequent tick checks – staff can assist campers with hard to see areas such as the scalp, ears, shoulders, and back of legs. Campers should be instructed to check the beltline, buttocks and groin area while showering.
- Have tick removal kits available for staff. If the camp has a nurse or EMT on staff, have them perform the tick removals, assess and care for the bite site.
- If a camper presents with acute illness (fever, rash, body/muscle ache), have a physician evaluate for tick-borne disease. Always report suspected cases of tick-borne disease to the local health department, even in the case of out-of-state visitors and campers.

Landscape and Facility Protections

Knowing where ticks congregate in the landscape is important to effective tick avoidance and control. There are methods to effectively combat ticks through the use of landscape modification and insecticide treatments. Below are important recommendations to consider:

- Ticks prefer moist, shaded wooded environments and well drained soils. They will normally congregate on vegetation from ground level to one meter high, along the edges of human and wildlife trails.
- Trimming vegetation and leaf litter back from the edge of trails used by campers and staff can help to prevent tick encounters.
- Maintain “high impact” zones where campers recreate most often (fields, playgrounds, etc.). Open, sunlit spaces with well trimmed grasses are least suitable for ticks. Vegetation at the edges of these areas should be kept trimmed. Lining the edges with mulch or rock borders will help prevent tick migration into these areas.



- Trim vegetation back from cabins and sleeping quarters. This will keep questing ticks and their rodent hosts farther from sleeping areas. Seal any cracks or holes that might allow rodent access.
- Insecticides labeled for use against ticks can be used along the edges of trails or recreation areas. Early season application of insecticide can have a large impact on tick populations throughout the summer. Application should be by a trained and certified pesticide applicator.

Read the “Ticks and Your Health” brochure, available at

www.michigan.gov/lymedisease

or see www.cdc.gov for more information

