

About ticks

Black-legged Tick



Dog Tick



Lone Star Tick



Different kinds of ticks feed on the blood of mammals (including people, dogs, cats, deer, and mice), birds, or reptiles (snakes and turtles, for example). In Massachusetts, certain kinds of ticks can bite you and spread diseases like **Lyme disease**, **babesiosis**, **anaplasmosis**, **tularemia**, **Rocky Mountain spotted fever**, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and **Powassan virus**.

Ticks do not fly or jump. They attach to animals or people that come into **direct contact** with them. Deer ticks and dog ticks are found throughout Massachusetts; Lone Star ticks are also found in some places in Massachusetts.

Black-legged Ticks

Black-legged ticks, sometimes called deer ticks, are responsible for spreading **Lyme disease**, **babesiosis**, **anaplasmosis**, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, and **Powassan virus**. Both nymph (young) and adult black-legged ticks will bite humans. The highest risk of being bitten by this kind of tick occurs throughout the spring, summer and fall seasons. However, adults can also be out searching for a host any time winter temperatures are above freezing. Black-legged tick nymphs are the size of a poppy seed and adults are the size of a sesame seed.

Dog Ticks

Dog ticks are responsible for spreading **Rocky Mountain spotted fever** and certain types of **tularemia**. In general, only the adult dog tick will bite humans. The highest risk of being bitten by a dog tick occurs during the spring and summer seasons. Adult dog ticks are about the size of a watermelon seed.

Lone Star Ticks

Lone star ticks are not a significant source of human illness in Massachusetts at this time but are capable of spreading tularemia, ehrlichiosis and southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI). Lone star tick saliva can be irritating but redness and discomfort at a bite site does not necessarily indicate any infection. Exposure to Lone Star tick saliva has been shown to cause an allergy to red meat in some people. The nymph and adult females most frequently bite humans.