

Submit-a-tick program

- If you find a tick on your pet, yourself, someone else, or anywhere outside, Alberta Health asks you to submit the tick for testing as part of a tick surveillance program.
- Ticks will be checked to see if they are blacklegged ticks. All blacklegged ticks will be tested to see if they carry the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, that can cause Lyme disease in humans. Results of this program will continue to help Alberta Health better understand the risk of Lyme disease in Alberta.



How do I submit a tick

- If a tick is attached to your skin, read how to remove a tick safely, below.
- Bring it in to an [Alberta Health Services Environmental Health office location](#) 📄 (Phone first to make an appointment).
- If you live in a First Nations community in Alberta, contact the health centre in your community.
- If you find a tick on your pet, you can take the tick to most veterinarians. Contact your local veterinary clinic to find out if they will submit ticks for testing for you.

Removing a tick safely

Although the risk of Lyme disease is very low in Alberta, there are other tick-borne diseases that can be transmitted by ticks; therefore, it is important to properly remove a tick as soon as possible.

If a tick is attached to your skin, take the following steps to safely remove it:

- Using tweezers, gently grasp its head and mouth parts as close to your skin as possible.
- Without squeezing the tick, slowly pull the tick straight up off the skin – do not jerk or twist it.
- Do not apply matches, cigarettes or petroleum jelly to the tick.
- Once the tick has been removed, clean the bite area with soap and water and disinfect the area with an antiseptic. Wash hands with soap and water.
- Save the tick in a clean, empty container. Do not add any ventilation holes to the container that is being used to put the tick(s) in. You can put more than one tick in the container if they are found on the same person or in the same general area in the environment.
- Add a small piece of tissue or cotton ball, lightly moistened with water, into the container to prevent the tick(s) from drying out.
- Submit the tick for testing as soon as possible.

Tick testing and results

- This program does not test for Lyme disease in humans. If you are concerned about a tick bite, see your physician.
- Tests performed on ticks submitted by the public will determine two things:
 - What kind of tick it was;
 - If it was a blacklegged tick – whether the tick is carrying the bacteria (*B. burgdorferi*) that can cause Lyme disease.
- After a tick is submitted, you will get the results back in approximately a week.



Lyme disease risk in Alberta

- In Alberta, the risk of being bitten by a blacklegged tick is very low. The risk of that same tick being infected with *B. burgdorferi*, is even lower.

Protect yourself from tick bites

- Walk on cleared trails whenever possible when walking in tall grassy or wooded areas.
- Wear light-coloured clothing and cover up as much skin as possible (e.g. hat, long-sleeved shirt, long pants with the legs tucked into socks or boots).
- Use a bug spray that contains the chemical DEET to repel ticks and reapply as frequently as directed.
- Check yourself for ticks after leaving a grassy or wooded area where ticks may live.
- Check your pets for ticks after they've been outside. You can't get Lyme disease from your pet, but your pet can bring infected ticks inside. These ticks can fall off your pet and attach themselves to you.
- If you find a tick, submit it (see how above). If you are concerned that you have been bitten by a tick, see a physician.

When to seek medical attention

- Individuals should seek medical attention if symptoms of Lyme disease develop, especially after a tick bite. Symptoms include:
 - A round, red rash that spreads at the site of a tick bite, known as a “bull’s eye rash”.
 - Flu-like symptoms: tiredness, headaches, sore muscles and joints and fever.

More information about Lyme Disease can be found at [MyHealthAlberta](https://myhealth.alberta.ca).