

**Contact Information:**

Mid-Michigan District Health Department  
Brady Guilbault  
(616) 788-3008  
bguilbault@mmdhd.org

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## Watch Out for Ticks This Summer

**St. Johns, Stanton, Ithaca, MI** – The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is reminding residents to watch for ticks during the warm summer months. Ticks may transmit numerous diseases, with the most common being Lyme Disease. Ticks generally prefer shady, moist areas in wooded and grassy locations, and are most active in the warmer months, from April to September, when the weather is above 40°F.

MMDHD Medical Director, Dr. Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP, says, “Most tick bites can’t cause illness unless the tick is attached for longer than 24 hours. Get into the habit of checking your entire body every night, including in your hair and under your clothes since ticks like to crawl up under them. Look and feel carefully for ticks and remove any you find to prevent getting infections.”

There are several tick species found in Michigan. Tick data for citizen-reported ticks is available on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) MiTracking data portal. Since 1999, the American Dog Tick (wood tick) has been the most widely reported tick in Michigan. The wood tick can transmit Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. The blacklegged Tick (deer tick) is the second most submitted tick in Michigan, which can transmit diseases like Lyme Disease. Other common ticks in Michigan include, the Lone Star Tick, Woodchuck tick, and the Brown Dog Tick (kennel tick).

Residents can prevent tickborne diseases by:

- Wearing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Checking for ticks daily.
- Showering after being outdoors.
- Calling your doctor if you get a fever or rash following a tick bite.

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove the tick as soon as possible. There are several tick removal devices on the market, but a plain set of fine-tipped tweezers works very well.

How to remove a tick:

1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin’s surface as possible.

2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
4. Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of a live tick by:
  - Putting it in alcohol,
  - Placing it in a sealed bag/container,
  - Wrapping it tightly in tape, or
  - Flushing it down the toilet.

If residents are concerned about a found tick, they can get them identified by MDHHS in 2 ways:

- Submitting a photo of your tick for identification. If residents submit a photo of their tick, MDHHS asks that 2 photos are captured. In a well-lit area, take a photo of the tick belly side down, and a photo belly side up. When the photos are captured, email the photos (JPEG, GIF, or PNG format) to: [MDHHS-Bugs@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-Bugs@michigan.gov).
- Mailing your tick to MDHHS for microscopic identification. MMDHD has tick kits on hand where residents can send in their tick for identification. *Supplies are limited at all 3 MMDHD branch locations. Once supplies run out, residents then must send photos of ticks to MDHHS.*

MMDHD has informational pamphlets and materials regarding ticks available at all 3 branch locations:

- **Clinton County Branch Office:** 1307 E. Townsend Road, St. Johns. Phone: 989-224-2195
- **Gratiot County Branch Office:** 151 Commerce Drive, Ithaca. Phone: 989-875-3681
- **Montcalm County Branch Office:** 615 N. State Street, Stanton. Phone: 989-831-5237

For additional information, visit <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/safety-injury-prev/environmental-health/topics/mitracking/ticks>, or <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>.

*The Mid-Michigan District Health Department has proudly served the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties since 1966. We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.*

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