



LYME DISEASE PREVENTION TIPS

[Return to
General
Information](#)

WHAT IS LYME DISEASE?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the bite of a tiny deer tick that carries the infection. If not properly diagnosed and treated promptly, it can become crippling and debilitating. According to the Chester County (PA) Health Department, Lyme disease is the #1 reportable disease in the county. All the suburban counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania are considered high-risk areas.



free download

WHO IS AT RISK FOR LYME DISEASE?

Anyone who works or plays outdoors is at risk. Deer ticks like cool, moist environments, like tall grassy areas around the edge of yards or along roads. They also like moist garden areas, around shrubs and in wooded areas. Outdoor workers, gardeners, campers, hikers, people who hunt or fish, golfers who stray into the rough, people who live in the city but go for a picnic in a park are all at risk. The list is endless. You can be at risk right in your own back yard. You can be at risk when mowing the lawn or picking up leaves in the fall. Children are especially vulnerable since they tend to run and play without caution.

You are at risk anywhere you see deer. Deer bring the ticks to your yard; birds and other animals also help transport the ticks. But the principal culprits in spreading the actual disease are mice. A deer tick infected with the Lyme bacteria and seeking a blood meal will bite a mouse. The tick transmits the Lyme bacteria to the mouse while feeding. Deer ticks can also transmit other diseases at the same time including: Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Bartonella, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, mycoplasmas, etc. Ticks are often described as cesspools of diseases. Then other deer ticks sucking on the infected mouse will become infected thereby spreading the diseases. Mice have been found with many deer ticks attached to them. The spring and summer months are the "Prime Time for Lyme," however you can be bitten any month of the year when the weather is mild. Ticks are active when the temperature gets above 40 degrees.

PREVENTION IN YOUR YARD

Keep your lawn mowed and cut down brushy areas. Remove enough trees so the lawn gets sunshine to create a less inviting environment for deer ticks. Remove brush and leaves around your house and the edge of the yard. Trim bushes away from your house. When working in your yard, avoid touching the ground with your bare hands. Avoid touching plants and bushes as much as

possible.

Pets are particularly vulnerable and frequently will bring deer ticks into your house. Inspect pets closely before they come in. See your veterinarian for protective chemicals that will kill deer ticks.

Use Damminix® tubes to kill the deer ticks. Damminix® consists of biodegradable cardboard tubes with cotton balls inside that are treated with permethrin. Mice will take the cotton back to their nest and the permethrin will kill the deer ticks but not the mice. It is highly targeted. Tests on Long Island, NY have shown that Damminix® will reduce the number of infected deer ticks by more than 90% year after year.

Have your yard sprayed with permethrin. This is a complement to the Damminix® tubes. Professionals spray only the tick habitat areas, edges of lawns, not the entire lawn, for example.

OTHER PREVENTION TIPS

Avoid tick-infested areas when possible. Avoid sitting directly on the ground or fallen logs; use a blanket or other ground cover. When walking near bushes or trees, avoid touching them. Walk in the center of trails. Avoid sitting on stonewalls or woodpiles; these are places deer ticks like.

CLOTHING

Wear light-colored long pants and long sleeves and white closely knitted socks when outside. Tuck your shirt into your pants and tuck your pants into your socks. This will help prevent a tick from crawling under your clothing and getting to your skin. Wear light colored gloves. The light color makes it easier to see a tick crawling on your clothing or gloves. Wear a hat to protect your head from deer ticks when working around bushes.

Consider wearing Rynoskin protective underwear. It is made of a closely knitted but breathable stretch fabric that ticks apparently have difficulty penetrating. It is especially helpful for hunters and those outdoors when the weather is cooler. It is available in long sleeved tops, long bottoms, socks, hoods and gloves.

Look at the differences among various types of socks. [\[click here\]](#)

PERMETHRIN TICK REPELLENT

Spray your boots, socks, pants, sleeves, gloves, and hat with permethrin spray. Do not apply it to your skin and apply it outdoors. The permethrin spray has the same active ingredient as the Damminix® tubes mentioned above only in a lower concentration. It not only repels deer ticks, but it will kill them. It is relatively long lasting. Follow all label directions carefully.

WHAT IS PERMETHRIN?

Permethrin is a synthetic chemical developed to simulate the natural chemical pyrethrum that protects plants from insect attack. Permethrin is not a natural

product. It is different from regular insect repellents in that it will kill insects and deer ticks as well as repel them. Also, the labels state that one treatment lasts 2 weeks. It was developed in the 1970s by the Department of Agriculture and has been used successfully since then.

SKIN PROTECTION

Avon makes Skin-So-Soft Bug Guard Plus IR3535®, but tests by Consumers Union and a group from the Mass General Hospital (published in the New England Journal of Medicine) showed this product not to be at all useful in repelling insects. DEET was reported to be the best repellent.

Insect repellents containing DEET are widely available and offered under many brand names. They can be used on skin or clothing. Many authorities suggest you use repellents with less than 10% DEET on the skin of children. All repellents should be applied to the skin carefully. Avoid getting the repellents in eyes. Adults should apply repellents to children. Follow label directions carefully. DEET repels insects by its vapors, so applying DEET to clothing can be effective.

AFTER RETURNING INDOORS

After returning inside do a careful tick check. Most deer ticks are tiny and may be hard to see. If possible, have someone else inspect you especially in the areas where it is difficult for you to see. Be sure to check your hairline. Parents should check their children whenever they have been outdoors and might have been exposed to ticks. Some parents give their boys a buzz haircut so it is easier to see a tick in the hair.

If you do find a deer tick attached, remove it carefully. Use fine pointed tweezers and grasp the tick as close to the mouth parts as possible. Pull gently straight out. Do not put petroleum jelly, alcohol or any irritant on the tick or try to get the tick to release by putting a lit match on it. Any agitation might cause the tick to regurgitate the Lyme bacteria into you. Save the tick in a plastic bag or vial with a moistened cotton ball for identification and testing. After removing the tick, see your Doctor promptly. If the tick is infected with the Lyme bacteria, early diagnosis and antibiotic treatment is the key to recovery. Delay will allow the Lyme bacteria to disseminate into tissue in the body where the antibiotics are less effective.

After returning inside, wash and dry your clothes immediately. Do not even let them lie on the floor since a deer tick might be attached and get loose in your house. Some people put the clothes in a trash bag then spray with permethrin & tie up the bag. This should kill the ticks or other insects before washing. Running the clothes through a timed 30 minute cycle on hot in a dryer will also kill ticks. They cannot survive being dried out.

Have a great DEER TICK-FREE year outdoors.

Enjoy the outdoors but be wise and protect yourself.

Protect your children.

Mention of brand names does not constitute endorsements by LDASEPA. The information here is not intended to be a substitute for sound medical advice from your physician.

Rynoskin

Har-Son, Inc.
PO Box 10772
Midwest City, OK 73140
405-737-2494

Information and ordering information can be found on web site:

<http://www.rynoskin.com/index.html>

Permethrin spray

It is available under several brand names including: Sawyer, Duranon, Permanone, etc. It can be found in retail stores including: Sports Authority, Dicks, and Pickering Feed. Look in the camping section.

Permethrin yard spray (many lawn care companies will do this, too.)

Bartlett Tree Experts
PO Box 177
Exton, PA 19341
610-594-4740

DEET spray

Sprays containing DEET are available under many brand names including: OFF, Deep Woods OFF, Cutters, Ben's etc.

They are widely available. Most authorities suggest you use only sprays with less than 10% DEET in them for application to children's skin.

Damminix - Local sources (be sure to call first to check it it is stock):

Brandywine Hardware, Pocopson, PA Corner of Route 926 opposite the elementary school

Agway West Chester on Matlack Street

[top of page](#) [Back to Useful Information](#)

[Webmaster](#) Updated December 13, 2007