



# Town of Darien

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## Ticks, Lyme Disease & Darien

The Health Department accepts ticks and submits them for testing to either the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station or the Greenwich Health Department. Because of the continued widespread concern and the serious health implications from Lyme Disease, this office maintains constant surveillance and offers the following:

- Testing done through the Experiment Station is free but the results are not available for three to four weeks.
- Greenwich Health Department can have results within five (5) working days but there is a fee of \$60.00 (payable to the Greenwich Health Department).
- Only those ticks removed from humans are tested – no testing is done on ticks taken from pets.
- In order for a tick carrying Lyme Disease to infect an individual, it must be attached to a human for at least 24 hours and be fully “engorged” with human blood.
- Only those ticks that have been engorged are tested.
- If the lab determines the tick has not been engorged, Lyme Disease transmission did not occur which is why testing is not done.
- In 2010, 166 “ticks” from Darien were submitted for testing, 65 were tested and 24 or 37% were found to be positive. Many of the items brought in for testing were not ticks.
- The percentage of positive ticks found in Darien is consistent with that found in neighboring communities. No specific “hot spots” of positive ticks were identified.

Some ways to reduce your risk to Lyme Disease:

- A study performed at Yale noted that the risk of contracting Lyme Disease is reduced by as much as 58% if one bathed or showered within two (2) hours of being outside in tick infested areas (which is just about anywhere there is underbrush).
- People who check themselves for ticks reduce the likelihood for contracting Lyme Disease
- Repellants, especially ones containing at least 30% DEET, have been shown to be effective for approximately three (3) hours after application.
- Reduce brush areas at the perimeter of yards, perhaps by installing a gravel walkway where the lawn meets the woods.
- Birds also carry ticks so birdfeeders should be kept away from the house. Also, birdfeeders attract rodents that also carry ticks
- Other advice such as yard treatments with pesticides or wearing various types of protective clothing is available but we all know how difficult it is to wear long sleeves and tuck long pants into boots when hiking or working in the garden. Vigilance is the best protector.

Remember, if you submit a tick and it is not tested, you are NOT at risk for Lyme Disease *from that tick*.

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