



Town of Darien

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Health Department

Ticks, Lyme Disease & Darien

The Health Department accepts ticks and submits them to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) for testing. Because of the continued widespread concern and the serious health implications from Lyme Disease and other diseases transmitted by ticks, this office maintains constant surveillance.

- Only those ticks removed from humans are tested; the lab does not test dog ticks or other ticks removed from pets.
- In order for a tick to transmit any disease or illness, it must be attached to a human for at least 24 hours and be fully “engorged” with human blood.
- The lab will only test ticks that have been engorged.
- *If the tick was not engorged, disease transmission did not occur and the tick will not be tested.*
- In 2018, the CAES tested 41 engorged deer ticks submitted by the Darien Health Department. Of those, 14 (34%) were found to be positive.
- So far in 2019, half of the ticks tested have been found to be positive. This is consistent with findings for the same time last year.
- Testing done through CAES is free with the results provided by email usually within a few days.

Some ways to reduce your risk to Lyme Disease:

- A recent 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.
- *Rodents, especially mice, are major carriers of ticks so you should minimize potential harborage areas such as wood and brush piles.*
- Birds carry ticks so keep birdfeeders away from the house. Also, birdfeeders attract rodents that carry ticks
- Other approaches 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 in the summer. Vigilance is the best defense.
- Free tick removal kits are available at the Health Department office in the Darien Town Hall.

If you submit a tick and it is found to be negative or it is not tested by the lab for any reason, you are not at risk for contracting Lyme Disease from that tick.

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