

# >> TOOLBOX TALK - Lyme Disease and Ticks

## Lyme disease and the Blacklegged/Deer Tick:

Lyme disease is a bacterial inflammatory infection that can be spread to people bitten by an infected blacklegged tick (also known as deer tick). The disease can be quite serious and hard to diagnose, with symptoms ranging from simple flu-like conditions to neurological illnesses that can affect all parts of the body and even lead, in advanced stages, to paralysis. The first known case to be contracted in Newfoundland was in August 2015, when a 4-year-old girl in Brigus was diagnosed with the disease after playing outside<sup>1</sup>. Although Lyme disease is not yet common in Newfoundland and Labrador, its prevalence is rising in some areas, including Atlantic Canada and each year some blacklegged/deer ticks infected with Lyme disease are found in Newfoundland and Labrador, likely carried in on migratory birds<sup>3</sup>.



During its nymph (i.e., infant) stage, a tick is only about the size of a period on a sentence. Many people are infected by nymph ticks, but don't suspect Lyme disease because they don't recall being bitten and may not get a serious rash<sup>2</sup>. For more information visit the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation at [www.canlyme.com](http://www.canlyme.com).

Stages of blacklegged/deer ticks shown left to right: Lava, Nymph, Adult male, Adult female  
Photo courtesy: California Department of Public Health

## Preventative measures:

Blacklegged/deer ticks prefer to live in tall grass, brush, and forested areas. If working in these areas use these tips to protect yourself from tick and insect bites:

- Use an insect repellent (always read product label directions before applying)
- Cover as much of your skin as possible, tuck pants legs into boots or socks
- Wear light-coloured clothing to be able to spot ticks on your clothes more easily
- Walk on well-travelled trails wherever possible to avoid grass, brush, or shrubs
- Check yourself, your family and pets after being in an area where ticks may be present<sup>3</sup>.

## Tick Removal

Grasp the tick with fine tweezers, as near to the skin as possible, and gently pull it straight out. Be careful not to squeeze the tick when removing it which could result in bacteria being injected into your body. Do not try to remove the tick with your fingers or through other methods. Once removed, save the tick in a small container with a lightly moistened cotton ball, for identification. Ticks from animals should be submitted for identification and Lyme disease assessment to the Animal Health Laboratory directly or through the regional offices of the Animal Health Division<sup>3</sup> of the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency of Newfoundland and Labrador ([www.faa.gov.nl.ca](http://www.faa.gov.nl.ca)).

### Sources:

1. CBC <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/>
2. Canada Lyme Disease Foundation <http://canlyme.com/lyme-basics/symptoms/>
3. Forestry and Agrifoods Agency <http://www.faa.gov.nl.ca/agrifoods/animals/health/lymedisease.html>

Complete and attach Toolbox Talk Meeting Form and process as per company policy.



## TOOLBOX MEETING FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ No. in Crew: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Last Meeting:

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	Names of Attendees (Signature Required)
<b>Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):</b>	
<b>Suggestions Offered:</b>	
<b>Action(s) to be Taken:</b>	
<b>Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:</b>	

Supervisor's Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_