



# Removing and submitting ticks for testing

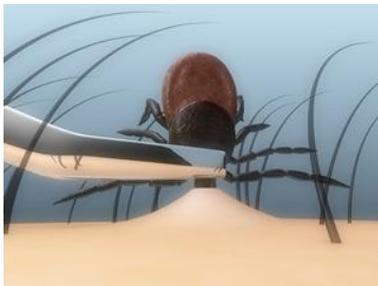
Learn how to identify and remove a tick from your body. Also find out how to submit a tick for identification and possible testing.

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## Identifying ticks

Different types of ticks live in Canada. Some can transmit diseases while others are only a nuisance. [Blacklegged ticks](#) can transmit the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.



### Related information

- [Blacklegged ticks](#)

## Removing ticks

You can remove a tick that has latched onto you. The tick will embed its mouthparts into your skin.

If you are not comfortable with removing a tick, visit your health care provider as soon as possible.

Otherwise, follow these steps to remove a tick:

1. Using clean tweezers, carefully grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull slowly upward, but try not to twist or crush the tick.
2. Once the tick is removed, wash the area where you were bitten with soap and water. You may also disinfect the area with alcohol or hand sanitizer. Wash your hands with soap and water.

If parts of the tick's mouth break off and remain in your skin, remove them with tweezers. Visit your health care provider if you cannot remove:

- parts of the tick's mouth in your skin
- the tick itself because it has buried itself deep into your skin

If you develop [symptoms of Lyme disease](#) after being bitten, contact your health care provider right away. Tell them:

- how long the tick was attached to you
- where you were when you were bitten by the tick

## Saving ticks

If you cannot submit the tick for testing right away (details on submitting ticks follow in the next section), then:

1. Save the tick in a plastic bag that you can seal or a pill bottle. Record the location and date of the bite.
2. Store the container for up to 10 days in the:
  - refrigerator, for live ticks
  - freezer, for dead ticks

## Submitting ticks for testing

Submitting a tick for identification and testing will not lead to a diagnosis or treatment. However, this information helps to understand:

- how blacklegged ticks have spread in Canada
- the risk of human exposure to infected blacklegged ticks

## Submitting ticks to a provincial public health laboratory

If possible, send any ticks that you have removed to a public health laboratory in your area. However, tick identification and testing is not done in all provinces of Canada.

The following provinces accept submissions:

- [British Columbia](#)
  - accepts tick submissions and performs its own tick testing
- [Alberta](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Quebec](#)

Contact your local public health authority for details on:

- the tick identification and testing program available in your area
- how to submit a tick for testing

The public health laboratory will:

- identify the tick
- forward only blacklegged ticks to the [National Microbiology Laboratory \(NML\)](#) for testing

## Submitting ticks to the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML)

If you live in a province that does not accept ticks for testing, please send ticks directly to the NML.

To submit to the NML, follow these steps:

## Packaging Instructions

1. Place the tick into an airtight plastic container to protect the tick during shipping. The container should be big enough to hold the tick without damaging it. Also make sure the container has a top that fastens securely (for example, a pill bottle). Transfer the tick to the container using tweezers, gloves or other protection.
2. Label the container with the following information:
  - your name
  - where and when the tick was collected
  - what the tick was removed from (human, dog or cat)
3. The following [submission form](#) must be included with your tick shipment.

## Shipping instructions

1. Prepare the container and submission form for shipping:
  - use a Government of Canada-approved mailing container or cardboard box
  - pad the container with bubble wrap, packing chips or paper towels to prevent it from breaking
  - use an envelope or plastic bag to protect the submission form
  - seal the mailing container with tape
2. Courier or mail the package to the NML at the following address:

## Mailing address

### Field Studies - Zoonotic Diseases and Special Pathogens

National Microbiology Laboratory  
1015 Arlington Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 3R2

## Processing time

It takes 2 to 6 weeks for the NML to:

- identify the tick
- test the tick
- release the results

## General enquiries

If you have any questions, please contact the NML:

- at 204-789-2000
- [by e-mail](#)

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<b>Lyme disease</b>
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Conference to develop a federal framework on Lyme disease
For health professionals: Lyme disease
Lyme disease awareness resources
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Risk of Lyme disease to Canadians
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