



Blacklegged ticks

The problem

Many tick species, in particular the blacklegged tick, have become increasingly abundant in many regions of Canada. These arthropods are considered to be a major public health threat due to their ability to transmit a wide range of human illnesses including Lyme disease and anaplasmosis.

Life cycle and behaviour

Blacklegged ticks have a two-year life cycle. Females can lay up to 18,000 eggs each spring. In summer, the eggs hatch into six-legged larvae that feed on blood from small animals such as birds and mice. As the ticks develop, they can begin to attach to larger animals such as pets, deer and humans. By the following spring, the larvae will become eight-legged nymphs that continue to feed on larger animals. In the fall, the nymphs will reach maturity, reproduce and lay eggs, and complete the life cycle.

Because blacklegged ticks cannot fly or jump, they have to crawl up vegetation or onto structures in order to cling to a passing host. Once attached, the ticks will remain with the host and feed for several days. Current data suggests the greatest chance of human infection occurs from late spring through summer.

Regional territory and local habitats

Geographically, tick populations are expanding north at an estimated rate of 45 kilometers per year, which is likely due to increasing warmth in recent decades and changes in animal migration patterns. One example of this expansion is the lone star tick, which is native to the southern United States but can now be found in southern Ontario.

Blacklegged tick populations increase rapidly each spring and reach peak numbers by early to midsummer.

Common tick habitats include:*

- Long grass areas, such as native plant areas
- Areas in or near tree-lined perimeters
- On ornamental plantings or dense shrubbery, especially those grown in shade

Envu control solutions

Suspend® PolyZone® insecticide, containing the active ingredient deltamethrin, is now labelled for control of blacklegged ticks. It is a fast-acting, broad-spectrum pyrethroid insecticide registered for control of ticks, ants, chinch bugs, cutworms and sod webworms on turfgrass.

For blacklegged tick control, treat with Suspend PolyZone at a rate of 12 milliliters per 100 meters squared in a carrier volume of 8 liters per 100 meters squared. Apply to areas that are most susceptible to tick populations, such as long grass, tree-lined perimeters, dense shrubbery and shady areas.

For more information about disease and insect control strategies, contact your local territory sales manager.

*Public Health Ontario has stated that blacklegged ticks can be transported by migratory birds and small mammals, which makes it possible to encounter an infected blacklegged tick almost anywhere.

Why are ticks a concern?

Certain ticks, such as blacklegged ticks, can carry bacteria that cause Lyme disease and are a major public health concern. Lyme disease is on the rise in Canada as these ticks continue to spread into new areas.

How to avoid getting a tick bite



Cover up by wearing

- light-coloured clothing, so it's easier to see ticks
- long pants, tucked into your socks
- closed-toed shoes
- long-sleeved shirts



Put clothes in the dryer

Kill any ticks that might be on your clothing by putting your clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes before washing them.



Use insect repellent

Use an insect repellent, or bug spray, that says "DEET" or "icaridin" on it. Put it on your clothes and exposed skin. Always read the label for directions on how to use it.



Check yourself

After being outdoors, check for ticks on yourself. Look behind your knees, on your head, in your belly button, in your groin area, in your underarm area, and on the back of your body (use a mirror or ask someone to check for you).



Removing ticks

Removing ticks within 24–36 hours after the tick bite usually prevents infection. You can remove a tick that has latched onto you by following these steps:

- 1 Using clean tweezers, grasp the head as close to the skin as possible and slowly pull straight out. Try not to twist or crush the tick.
- 2 If the mouthparts break off and remain in the skin, remove them with tweezers or, if you are unable to remove them easily, leave them alone and let the skin heal. Consult your health care provider.
- 3 Wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol hand sanitizer.
- 4 Try to save the tick that bit you in a sealed container and record the date of the bite. Bring it to your medical appointment as it may help the doctor in their assessment of your illness.

To talk about your specific needs or to learn more about our solutions, please contact an Envu representative.

