

# Blacklegged “Deer” Ticks

## QUICK STATS:



**Color:**

Orange-brown with dark legs



**Shape:**

Flat, broad oval



**Size:**

$\frac{1}{8}$  inch long



**Region:**

Found primarily in the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, southeastern and north central regions of the U.S.



# Blacklegged “Deer” Ticks



*Ixodes scapularis*

## OVERVIEW:

A notorious biting insect, the blacklegged tick is named for its dark legs, which are a contrast to its pale body. Blacklegged ticks are sometimes called deer ticks.

## HABITS:

Blacklegged deer ticks climb grass and shrubs to wait for a passing host. Adult ticks feed primarily on the white-tailed deer during the winter. In the spring, the female drops off the host and deposits about 3,000 eggs. Nymphs feed on mice, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, dogs, humans and birds.

## THREATS:

Blacklegged deer ticks are a vector of Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and babesiosis. Lyme disease is of primary concern in the United States. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue and a characteristic bull's eye shaped skin rash. Lyme disease can also affect joints, the heart and the nervous system if left untreated.

## PREVENTION:

- Wear light-colored long pants, long-sleeve shirts and closed-toe shoes when in wooded areas or tall grasses.
- Wear bug spray containing at least 20% DEET when outdoors.
- When hiking, stay in the center of trails, away from vegetation.
- Inspect yourself carefully for ticks after being outdoors. If you find a tick, remove it with a slow, steady pull.
- Inspect your pets for ticks on a routine basis.
- Consult with your doctor immediately if you believe you have contracted Lyme disease.
- If you find ticks in your home or on your property, contact a licensed pest professional.

## DID YOU KNOW? Blacklegged deer ticks...

- do not jump or fly, but can drop from their perch and fall onto a host. Some species of ticks actually follow a host by foot until they can climb aboard.
- can live as long as 200 days without food or water.

For more information, visit [PESTWORLD.org](http://PESTWORLD.org)

