Tick bite risk in Québec

It is possible to be bitten by ticks **in any region of the province.**

Lyme disease is the main infection transmitted by ticks in Québec, but other infections can also be transmitted by tick bites.

High-risk environments

Activity period

Ticks can be active whenever outside temperatures reach 4°C, year-round.

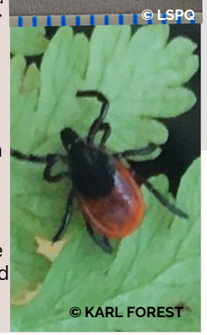
Characteristics

- Has 8 legs (nymph and adult stages)
- Measures between 1 and 13 mm (depending on species and growth stage)
- Does not jump, fly or drop from trees or high surfaces
- Attaches to people or animals when they brush against vegetation where it hides
- Attaches itself firmly to the skin

PHOTO : ***Ixodes scapularis*** ticks at different life stages: larvae, nymphs, adult males, adult females and blood-engorged females. >>>>>>

Did you know?

- A dozen species of tick have been identified in Québec.
- Tick bites are generally painless and often go unnoticed.
- *Ixodes scapularis,* also known as the blacklegged tick or deer tick, is the only species in Québec that can transmit Lyme disease. However, not all ticks are infected with the bacteria causing the disease.

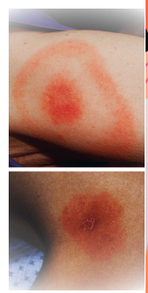


Lyme Disease

- Lyme disease is an infection that may occur after the bite of a tick carrying a specific bacteria.
- Ticks can stay attached to the body for several hours.
- Removing the tick within 24 h following a bite considerably reduces the risk of contracting the disease.

Symptoms

The most common symptom is a skin rash around the bite :



- Usually appears 3-30 days after the bite
- Often round or bull's eye-shaped
- With or without a clear outline
- Can look like a bruise on darker skin tones
- **Expands rapidly (> 5 cm)**
- **Persists for more than 48 h** with little or no pain/itching

>>> Fatigue, headaches and aches may also occur.

If left untreated, other symptoms may appear in the weeks to months following the bite, namely :

- Multiple spreading rashes
- Neck pain
- Chest pain, palpitations
- Swelling in one or more joints
- Dizziness
- Facial paralysis
- Numbness of a limb

Treatment

Antibiotic treatment is generally effective against Lyme disease if detected and treated early.

AVOID

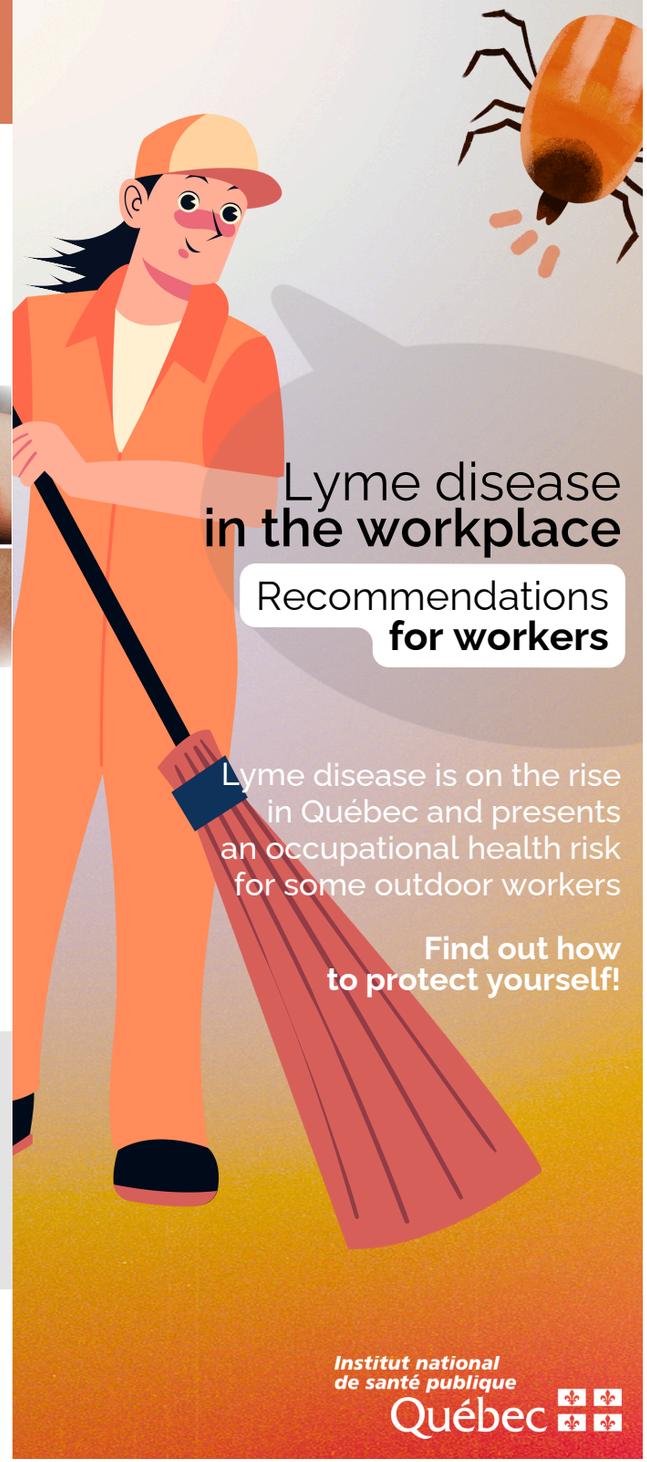
Tick testing to detect the presence of the bacteria causing Lyme disease is not recommended and should not be used as an aid in patient diagnosis and treatment.

For more information, visit : www.quebec.ca/lyme OR www.inspq.qc.ca/zoonoses/tiques

Developed with the financial support of the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec

Institut national de santé publique Québec

V. 05.2026



Lyme disease in the workplace

Recommendations for workers

Lyme disease is on the rise in Québec and presents an occupational health risk for some outdoor workers

Find out how to protect yourself!

Institut national de santé publique Québec

Minimize exposure to ticks during outdoor activities in high-risk environments

BEFORE the activity

1 **Adapt** your work clothes. **Wear** :
- Light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants (makes spotting ticks easier)
- Long socks and closed shoes
- Hat

✔ ***Cover up as best you can*** *(e.g. Shirt tucked into your pants, pants tucked into your socks).*

2 **Apply** bug repellent containing :
- Icaridine (20 % or less) OR
- DEET (30 % or less)

... on exposed body parts (not protected by clothing), closely following instructions.

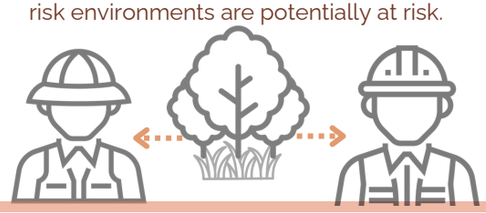
3 **Ensure** you have access to fine-tipped tweezers, a small airtight container and antiseptic swabs.

DURING the activity

1 **Stay away** from tall grass and leaf litter, walking if possible :
- in the center of trails
- on landscaped/artificial surfaces (gravel, wood mulch, etc.)

What type of workers are at risk?

All outdoor workers in contact with high-risk environments are potentially at risk.



AFTER the activity

1 **Inspect** all exposed belongings (clothes and equipment) for ticks, especially at the end of the day, or before entering a building or vehicle.

2 **Perform** a thorough body check looking for ticks, paying particular attention to these less visible body parts :

scalp and hairline →
neck + behind the ears →
armpits →
back →
inside the navel →
genitals and groin →
knees →

✔ **Ask for help if needed.**

3 **Take** a shower as soon as possible to :
- dislodge loose ticks
- inspect the body for fixed ticks or bites while naked

4 **Dry** the garments in the dryer at very hot temperatures for 60 minutes (to remove and kill any tick). **Wash** and dry as usual.

AVOID

DO NOT...

- remove the tick with our fingers or fingernails;
- burn the tick
- rotate or tilt the tick using the tweezers
- squeeze the tick's abdomen when grasping it with the tweezers
- apply products on the tick (e.g. Vaseline, [essential] oils, rubbing alcohol, nail polish, etc.)

This can increase the risk of transmission of the bacteria.

In case of a bite?

Remove the tick **as soon as possible**

1 **Grab** the tick as close to the skin as possible using fine-tipped tweezers.

2 **Pull** steadily and firmly upwards in a straight direction until it detaches.

* *If the tick's mouthparts break off during removal, it's not a cause of major concern. They can't transmit the disease and will usually detach on their own as the body heals.*

3 **Place** the tick in an airtight container and store in the freezer in case you need to consult a doctor. Note the date of the bite and visited location.

4 **Clean** the bite, hands and tweezers with soap and water. Antiseptic swabs can also be used.

5 **Call Info-Santé 811** to know what to do next. Depending on the situation, it is possible to receive a preventive antibiotic *[free service, available in French and English].*

AFTER removing the tick

1 **Write down :**
- date and time of removal
- location of the bite on the body
- place and time of high-risk activity

2 **Inform** your employer that you have been bitten while working.

3 **Record** the bite in the "accident, incident and first-aid" occupational registry (CNESST).