

Department of Health Launches New Dashboard to Help Prevent Tickborne Diseases

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has launched [a new online dashboard](#) to provide Pennsylvania residents and health care providers with information about tickborne diseases. The dashboard was designed for Pennsylvanians to use themselves, so they can see where ticks are prevalent and be prepared to take appropriate precautions while enjoying outdoor activities.

The tickborne diseases dashboard allows visitors the opportunity to review the latest state data on tickborne disease activity, such as Lyme disease. The data include case counts across Pennsylvania and cases per 100,000 residents per county to understand the prevalence of ticks.

“Pennsylvania has incredible outdoor recreational opportunities, and we want to provide as much information as possible for residents to enjoy them safely,” said **Acting Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. “Taking appropriate precautions can help avoid Lyme and other tickborne diseases that can lead to serious illness. As a pediatrician, I always recommend doing a tick check after playing outside, especially for children and pets.”

Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tickborne disease in Pennsylvania and many other states, but there are several other diseases ticks can carry. In 2022, Pennsylvania ranked ninth in the United States for the number of Lyme disease (LD) cases reported by population. Although tickborne diseases can occur any time of the year, cases increase from April through August. In 2022, 8,413 LD cases were reported in Pennsylvania, representing an incidence of 64.9 cases/100,000 persons.

Reporting of LD in Pennsylvania is now entirely based on laboratory reports the Department receives directly from lab-based reporting. Prior to 2022, LD cases were classified based on laboratory and clinical information obtained from health care providers. Since that date, clinical information is no longer required, and LD cases are reported based only on laboratory criteria.

TICK BITE PREVENTION AND TICK REMOVAL

Individuals with exposure to wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter are at greatest risk of tick exposure. Residents can reduce the likelihood of a tick bite by:

- walking in the center of trails and avoiding areas with high grass and leaf litter;
- using [EPA-approved insect repellents](#) on exposed skin;
- using products that contain 0.5% permethrin to pre-treat shoes, clothing, and gear;
- wearing light-colored clothing, which will make it easier to see crawling ticks;
- conducting full-body tick checks (including pets) after spending time in tick habitats;
- bathing or showering within two hours after coming indoors; and
- placing clothing worn outdoors in the dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks.

If an attached tick is found, it should be promptly removed using fine-tipped tweezers. The tick should be grasped as close to the skin's surface as possible and pulled upward with steady, even pressure. CDC's [directions for tick removal](#) can be found online.

LYME DISEASE PREVENTION EDUCATION

Each year, state agencies host an elementary-school student Lyme Disease Art Contest where students submit art and videos about preventing Lyme disease. Winners of this year's contest will be announced May 16, and their artwork will be on display in the East Wing of the Capitol building until the end of May.

[Find the Tickborne Disease Dashboard and more information](#) on tickborne diseases at the Department of Health's website.