



## 10 April 2012      Lyme Disease Surge Predicted For the Northeast U.S.

People heading into the woods this spring in Northeastern states will be at higher risk than usual of coming down with Lyme disease, according to researchers at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, N.Y.

The tick population is expected to pose a far greater threat of Lyme disease transmission this spring.

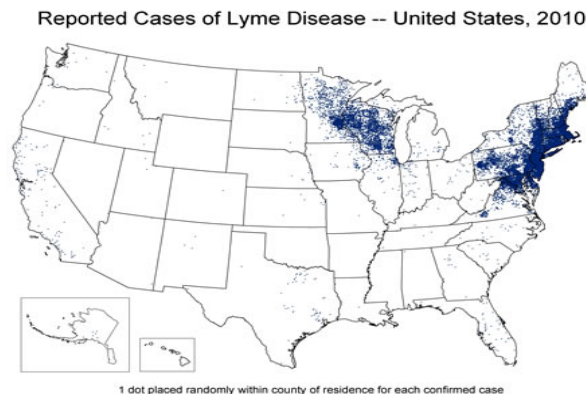
Ticks feed as larvae, nymphs and adults, and the May-to-July nymph season will be especially dangerous because it is a time of year when many people head to the woods and ticks often go unnoticed.

“They’re really tiny — about as big as poppy seeds—so they’re hard to detect,” he said. “You might not even know they’re crawling on you or embedding in your skin. But infected nymphs are responsible for the vast majority of Lyme cases, he added.

Cases of Lyme disease have spiraled over the past 30 years from a few hundred to 30,000 reported annually, with 90 percent of them occurring in the Northeast.<sup>1</sup>

In 2010, 94% of Lyme disease cases were reported from 12 states:

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- **New Jersey**
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia
- Wisconsin



While there are effective treatments, the disease can cause chronic fatigue, joint pain and neurological problems if left undiagnosed

While it is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.

#### Avoid Direct Contact with Ticks

- Avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.

#### Repel Ticks with DEET or Permethrin

- Use repellents that contain 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on the exposed skin for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and remains protective for up to 70 washings.
- Other repellents registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may be found at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>.

#### Find and Remove Ticks from Your Body

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day packs. Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks.

#### Lyme Disease Vaccine

A Lyme disease vaccine is no longer available. The vaccine manufacturer discontinued production in 2002, citing insufficient consumer demand. Protection provided by this vaccine diminishes over time. Therefore, if you received the Lyme disease vaccine before 2002, you are probably no longer protected against Lyme disease.

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times April 4, 2012