



**Benzie County Office**  
6051 Frankfort Hwy, Ste 100  
Benzonia, MI 49616

Phone: 231-882-4409  
Fax: 231-882-0143

[www.bldhd.org](http://www.bldhd.org)

**Leelanau County Office**  
7401 E. Duck Lake Rd  
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653

Phone: 231-256-0200  
Fax: 231-882-0143

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Seasonal Tick Awareness Notice**

Springtime means more people head outdoors, which also means the chances of incidental human-tick interactions increase.

It is important to know the risks when it comes to ticks. Several kinds of ticks can carry dangerous bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Not all tick bites will make you sick, but tick-borne diseases do occur in Michigan, such as Lyme Disease, Anaplasmosis, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Babesiosis. Last year, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department reported 34 suspected or confirmed cases of Lyme Disease and six suspected or confirmed cases of Ehrlichiosis.

Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during the warmer months (April-September). Tick bites are commonly associated with adult ticks, but the larvae and nymphs also bite and are very difficult to spot because they are smaller than a sesame seed – one reason that Lyme disease cases peak in early summer months. It is important to take steps to prevent tick bites when spending time in wooded or grassy environments, and even in your own yard.

"Ticks are a natural part of many landscapes, but changes to the landscape are causing more and more ticks to spread to more areas," said Scott Tucker, Superintendent of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. "Reducing exposure to ticks and removing ticks promptly can protect you and your family from tick-borne diseases. A few tips are to stay on trails, keep your dog on a leash, and do a tick check after every visit to the lakeshore" Tucker added.

"I encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the outdoors, but whenever possible stay on established trails, avoid thick brush and other areas that are likely to harbor ticks, and take precautions to reduce risk from tick bites both before and after your time in the woods" said Joshua Meyerson, Medical Director for the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department.

Know the precautionary measures to protect yourself and your loved ones against ticks and the diseases they may carry:

- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours. It can also be used in children over 2 months of age. Care should be taken to avoid eyes and mouth.
- Wear clothing that has been treated with permethrin.
- Before going back indoors remove ticks from your clothes and pets
- Look for ticks on your body, especially the scalp, ears, armpits, belly button, waist, and groin.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after coming indoors.
- If you find an imbedded tick, immediately remove it as it typically requires 36 to 48 hours to transmit Lyme disease. Use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible and pull upward.

Questions regarding ticks and other vectors in Benzie and Leelanau counties should be directed to the Benzie Leelanau District Health Department's Environmental Health Division at 231-882-2103. Health-related questions should be directed to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-517-335-9030.

Additional information regarding ticks and Lyme disease can be found here:

- [Preventing tick-borne illness in Michigan](#)
- [Ticks and Your Health](#)
- [MDHHS - Ticks](#)
- [CDC – Ticks](#)

Media Contact:

Rachel Pomeroy, PIO

231-882-6085

[RPomeroy@bldhd.org](mailto:RPomeroy@bldhd.org)

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