

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

