

# Risk Areas

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 [canlyme.com/lyme-prevention/risk-areas/](https://canlyme.com/lyme-prevention/risk-areas/)

Though it's possible for ticks to travel anywhere by attaching to birds, people who live or work in Lyme "hotspots" have a greater risk of contracting the disease.

It's important to learn more about Lyme "hotspots" so you can take extra precautions to avoid being infected. Remember, just because you don't live in an area known for Lyme disease, doesn't mean you can't be infected.

## Common tick habitats

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Ticks live in some of our favourite outdoor places; like grassy fields, the woods, gardens, beaches and nature parks. Ticks need blood to survive, so they choose to live in habitats frequented by potential mammal hosts. Areas with dense deer populations are often Lyme disease hotspots.

## Higher risk in eastern Canada

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Lyme-carrying ticks can be found across the country, yet eastern Canada consistently reports the highest rate of infection. There are several contributing factors, but a major one is eastern Canada's large population of White-Tailed Deer – the deer tick's preferred host. Eastern and central Canadian provinces also share borders with Lyme "hotspots" in the United States and are within flight distance for ticks catching rides on migratory birds.

Despite the frequency of infection, Lyme disease awareness is still relatively low in the east.

### How to take action

## Risk throughout Canada

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Even though eastern Canada and Manitoba are areas where Lyme disease is higher, all Canadians are at risk for contracting Lyme. Infected ticks are found throughout Canada and areas that were once considered low-risk are quickly becoming higher risk areas as the ticks establish local populations.

In areas of Canada that pose lower risk of Lyme disease, doctors may not be thinking of Lyme disease and often miss diagnosis during the easy-to-treat stage. Remember that all Canadians have a risk of encountering an infected tick; and the risk is increasing for all Canadians.

## Risk year-round

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Although you're most likely to contract Lyme disease from May through September, it's possible to be infected year-round – especially if you live in a high-risk area. Infection rates increase in the spring and summer months because the major species of Borrelia-infected ticks (*Ixodes scapularis* and *I. pacificus*) are in their nymphal stage, and harder to see.

Once a tick is infected with Borrelia, it remains a carrier until it dies.

## Are you in danger?

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If you live or work in a tick-infested area, there are certain jobs that are higher risk for Lyme disease. It's important to take extra precautions if you work in the following fields:

- Landscaping
- Construction
- Environmental Conservation
- Park/Wildlife Management
- Beach Lifeguard
- Farming
- Land Surveying

Some recreational activities are also higher risk and require extra precautions in tick-infested areas.

- Hiking, especially sitting on deadfall trees when taking a break
- Horse riding
- Hunting
- Fishing from shore
- Gathering wood

### 10 tips for high-risk areas