

## Update: Ticks & Powassan Disease

Ticks are an ever-present problem for individuals or groups of people spending time out in nature for extended periods of time. Although there are many different species of tick across the United States in different regions that carry various diseases and illnesses, there is one disease that is rarely carried by ticks and can be fatal to those it comes in contact with.

Ticks are small spider-like insects that bite into the skin of a host and feed on the blood of that host. They have a small range of size and can be hard to detect. Ticks can be hard to spot as they wait for hosts by hiding among leaves or no tall grasses and shrubs. Although not every tick species carries disease, it is important to recognize the risks that come when in contact with ticks at any moment. Ticks are most active during the late-spring, early-summer, and mid-fall times of the year. In the upper northeastern regions of the United States, an illness that was originally discovered in Canada has amounted roughly 75 cases over the past 10 years across the upper Northeast and Great Lakes regions of the U.S. Dubbed the Powassan virus, this disease is carried and transmitted by infected ticks that come into contact with people.

Symptoms that occur from the infection include fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, seizures, and memory loss. In some cases, there can be serious neurological problems from the infection. Recognizing the symptoms is essential if you have come in contact with a tick, while the incubation period of an infection can range anywhere from one week to one month. No specific treatment exists for this form of tick borne disease and immediate hospitalization is necessary to support the infected individual. Fluids and medication will be needed to aid in the recovery process. The effects ticks can have on the hosts they infect can be dangerous, but there are measures that can be taken to prevent ticks from attaching to people.

1. Apply tick repellents prior to entering environments where ticks may be present.
2. Wear long sleeves and pants when in/ near wooded areas.
3. Avoid bushy or wooded areas altogether.
4. Do not enter areas where heavy tick infestation has been reported or encountered.
5. Complete tick checks after spending long periods of time outdoors.
6. Bathe or shower no longer than 2 hours after being outdoors to help find ticks that may have attached.

For more information and FAQs regarding the Powassan infection, see <https://www.cdc.gov/powassan/> for further details. Other information here can be presented to learn more about prevention of tick attachment and detection.