



HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT MEDIA RELEASE

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CONTACT:
Christina Anthony &
Matt Johnson, PIOs
pio@kalcounty.com

Results of 2022 Tick Surveillance Released

Kalamazoo, MI – The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (HCS) received test results from blacklegged ticks submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in October 2022. Out of the 76 blacklegged ticks captured and identified earlier that year, 22 tested positive for Lyme Disease—which can spread to the heart, nervous system, and joints if left untreated.

“Vector-borne disease surveillance, such as tick dragging, yields critical data that the Environmental Health team can use to protect citizens of Kalamazoo County from possible illnesses such as Lyme Disease,” said Environmental Health Division Manager Lucas Pols.

Blacklegged Tick Testing Result	Disease	Symptoms	Number
Borrelia burgdorferi	Lyme Disease	Fever, headache, fatigue, skin rash	22
Borrelia miyamotoi	Hard Tick Relapsing Fever	Fever, chills, headache	2
Anaplasma phagocytophilum non-human active strain	Non-Human Anaplasmosis	Harmful to Animals	2

While tick exposure can occur year-round, the disease-carrying pests tend to be most active during the warmer months of April to September. Residents can prevent tick bites and the illnesses they may cause by following the tips below.

Before you go outdoors:

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yards or neighborhood.
- **Treat clothing and gear** with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing, and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
- **Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellent](#)**, and always follow product instructions.
- **Avoid contact with ticks**
 - Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
 - Walk in the center of trails.

After you come indoors:

- **Check your clothing for ticks.** Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Remove any ticks found. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium-temperature water will not kill ticks.
- **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 daypacks.
- **Shower soon after being outdoors.** Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks, which is a good opportunity to do a tick check.
- **Check your body for ticks after being outdoors.** Conduct a full body check upon returning from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body.

For more information about tick surveillance and prevention, visit <https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/eh/> or call 269-373-5210.

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