



**BRISTOL-BURLINGTON HEALTH DISTRICT**  
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### Tick Testing Information for Residents

Effective January 1, 2006, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station will accept all ticks for identification but test only those *Ixodes scapularis* ticks that have ingested human blood. They will examine all ticks for degree of engorgement. Laboratory personnel will test engorged black-legged ("deer") ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) and, upon special request, certain other species of ticks for the presence of spirochetes that cause Lyme disease. They will not test the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), larval ticks of all species, or unengorged ticks.

Ticks should be submitted by residents to their municipal health departments. The health departments will then submit them to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station with a request for identification and/or testing for the Lyme disease agent. The best way to send a tick is in a small plastic zipper-locking bag or a clear plastic vial with a tight-fitting lid. Dry ticks are easier for the lab to process than ticks preserved in alcohol.

For the safety of lab personnel and ease in handling, please avoid the following: plastic film canisters, especially those which are black; glass containers; ticks mounted on glass slides; and ticks preserved in formalin. Ticks under cellophane tape are also difficult to handle.

The following information should accompany the tick: Name, address, and telephone number of person submitting the tick; name, age, and sex of person bitten; date tick was removed; part of body where tick was found; town in which tick was acquired. Ticks will be accepted only from residents of Connecticut.

Tick test results will be submitted to the Health District. If the tick tests positive, a District staff member will call the phone number provided at the time of tick submission and inform them of the result.

Submitters of ticks are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to their health after a tick bite. The tick testing is helpful information but cannot be used as a diagnostic tool. It takes approximately 3 to 4 and sometimes 5 weeks to receive results from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Lyme disease, or other tick borne illnesses, can onset prior to obtaining tick test results, therefore it is important to monitor health, communicate and possibly visit with a personal physician before tick testing results are received.

Ticks are almost everywhere - take care to reduce possible exposure - and do a tick check every day.