Michigan’s Five Most Common Ticks

Ticks are significant carriers of pathogens that cause human and animal disease. Listed here is a ranked order of the ticks most likely to bite humans in Michigan.

1. American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)
   - **Distribution:** Widespread throughout Michigan forests and grassy areas
   - **Key Facts:** These ticks are active from early May-November, and will bite both humans and companion animals.
   - **Diseases:** Diseases associated with the American dog tick are rare in Michigan, but may include *Rocky Mountain spotted fever* and *tularemia*.

2. Blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)
   - **Distribution:** Emerging in Michigan, see map at right
   - **Key Facts:** Found on low forest vegetation, often along human and animal trails.
   - **Diseases:** *Lyme disease* is the most common tick-borne disease in Michigan. Other rare diseases include: *anaplasmosis*, *babesiosis*, *deer-tick virus*, and *ehrlichiosis*.

3. Lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)
   - **Distribution:** Occasionally found in wooded and grassy areas across the state
   - **Key Facts:** An aggressive biter of humans and companion animals, adult females have distinctive “Lone Star” mark
   - **Diseases:** *Ehrlichiosis*, *rocky mountain spotted fever*, *tularemia*

4. Woodchuck tick (*Ixodes cookei*)
   - **Distribution:** Found most commonly on pets throughout Michigan
   - **Key Facts:** Usually found near dens of skunks and woodchucks, will bite companion animals near animal dens and occasionally humans
   - **Diseases:** *Powassan encephalitis*

5. Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*)
   - **Distribution:** Occasionally found in Michigan.
   - **Key Facts:** can uniquely survive and breed in indoor environments, has been associated with kennel, shelter, and breeding facilities. Good hygiene practices can prevent indoor infestations.
   - **Diseases:** *Rocky mountain spotted fever*, *canine babesiosis*, *canine ehrlichiosis*

---

**Tick Bite and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention**

- Use insect repellents containing no more than 30 percent DEET.
- Use repellents that contain permethrin on clothing.
- After spending time outdoors, check your skin and clothes for ticks.
- See your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of fever, rash, body aches or fatigue.

For more information visit: [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases)  
Updated January, 2018

All pictures © Kent Loeffler – Cornell University