

Mosquito and Tick Bite Illnesses

THO Manual | February 2026

Vector-borne diseases are illnesses that are spread to people through the bites of infected insects or other animals (called “vectors”). Common vectors include mosquitoes and ticks. These vectors carry germs, like viruses or bacteria, from one host to another.

Town Health Officers (THOs) play an important role in helping prevent the spread of these diseases. They share monitoring and risk updates, provide education, and respond to local needs.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHTHO@Vermont.gov.

Mosquito-borne Diseases

In Vermont, mosquito season starts in the spring, but mosquitoes don’t typically pose a health risk until the summer months. By July, some mosquitoes may be carrying viruses like West Nile virus (WNV) Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE, “Triple E”) virus and Jamestown Canyon virus (JCV). These viruses can spread through the bite of an infected mosquito and can cause illness in humans and animals.

From June to October, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture collects mosquitoes at various locations across Vermont. The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory tests the mosquitoes for mosquito-borne viruses weekly, and the Vector-Borne Diseases Program summarizes and reports the results.

Role of the THO

You can help share information in your communities to help prevent mosquito bites and to raise awareness when we find virus activity or cases in your area. Each week during mosquito monitoring season, we email testing results and other information to THOs. Our email will include a messaging toolkit that contains suggested posts and images to share across communication channels like Front Porch Forum, social media, and local newsletters.

Stay Informed

You can find [information about mosquito-borne diseases](#) on our website. Here are a few things to review to stay informed:

- The best ways to prevent mosquito bites. This includes wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors, limiting time outdoors at dawn and dusk, and using insect repellent. Get more tips and information at HealthVermont.gov/mosquito.

- [Data published throughout the monitoring season.](#)
- The [Annual Report](#) provides an overview of the most recent monitoring season.
- The [Arbovirus Surveillance and Response Plan](#) is a comprehensive outline of the state's response to mosquito-borne viruses.
- Illness-specific information, including symptoms.

Summary of Activity in Vermont

- **EEE** activity clusters near acidic, hardwood swamps, most commonly in Franklin, Grand Isle, Addison, and northern Rutland counties. EEE virus infection in humans is rare but can cause severe illness and death.
- The risk for **WNV** is considered widespread in the state, especially during July to September. WNV infection is more common and usually mild, but it can cause severe illness.
- In 2025, the Vermont Department of Health began testing mosquitoes for **JCV**. JCV is found throughout much of the U.S. JCV infections often don't cause illnesses. If people do develop symptoms, they're usually mild. Rarely, JCV can cause serious illness.

Tick Bite Illnesses

Illnesses spread through the bite of an infected tick continue to be a serious public health concern in Vermont. Lyme disease and anaplasmosis are the most common tick bite illnesses in Vermont.

Ticks may be active whenever temperatures are above freezing, and the chances of getting a tick bite are highest from May to November. There are several species of ticks found in Vermont, but blacklegged ticks spread nearly all reported tick bite illnesses. They live in wooded, grassy, and brushy areas.

The best way to prevent tick bite illnesses is to prevent tick bites:

- Wear tick repellent and talk to your vet about options for pets.
- Do regular tick checks (check pets, too).
- Shower soon after spending time outdoors.
- Watch for symptoms (like fever, aches, rash) after removing an attached tick or spending time in tick habitat.

Find more prevention tips and information at HealthVermont.gov/BeTickSmart.

Role of the THO

Help spread the word about how to prevent tick bites. Order [free, professionally printed educational materials](#) to share in your communities, including posters, pocket cards, stickers, and booklets.

Stay Informed

Explore our [website](#) for data and more information, like:

- Emergency room and urgent care visits for tick-related issues.
- Case data in the [Tick Bite Illness Data dashboard](#).
- [Reports](#) from our tick monitoring program. We work with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to collect ticks from around the state. The ticks are identified by their species, life stage, and sex. Blacklegged ticks are tested for pathogens that cause illnesses.
- Illness-specific information for those found in Vermont: Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, hard tick relapsing fever, ehrlichiosis, and Powassan virus disease.

We also have an online tool, the [Vermont Tick Tracker](#), that anyone can use to report tick sightings and help contribute to our understanding of ticks in Vermont.

Questions?

Find more information about infectious diseases at HealthVermont.gov/disease-control.

Contact an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist at 802-863-7240 or toll-free at 800-640-4374.