

The Life Cycle of the Blacklegged Tick

Tick life cycles generally span multiple years, but vary depending on the species. The Blacklegged Tick, or Deer Tick, has a life cycle that generally lasts two years. The three blood feeding life stages (larva, nymph, and adult) require a new host for each stage of their life.

For more information visit cdc.gov/ticks or call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County at 607-334-5841.

First Year of Life

Engorged females lay eggs on the ground, generally where they detach from their hosts.



Eggs hatch into larvae and seek their first host, with peak activity in the late summer. This is when ticks pick up infections that they typically carry through the rest of their life cycle.



Fed larvae drop off hosts, molt into nymphs, and lay dormant over the winter.

Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr.

Second Year of Life

Nymphs begin seeking their second host.



Nymphs feed on a wide variety of hosts (including people). This life stage is often infected and quite small, making it easy to miss.



Nymphs molt into adult ticks and seek medium to large hosts, including deer and people. This life stage can have a high infection rate, but tends to be larger, making them easier to find once bitten.



Winter and freezing weather will not kill black legged ticks. Adults become active during warm days in the winter months.

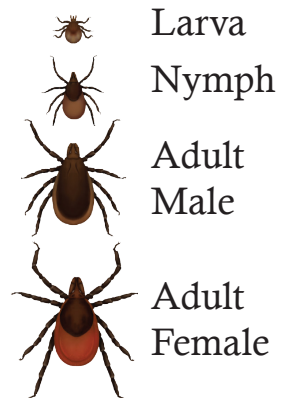
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 Larva
 Nymph
 Adult

Host seeking/Blood Feeding



Possible Hosts



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