



NatCapLyme

The National Capital Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Association

We Help You Fight The Bite



WHY TEST YOUR TICK?

- Testing your tick provides vital clues to the diseases you may have contracted from the bite. This information can help your doctor narrow down a diagnosis and begin timely treatment.
- The likelihood of successfully detecting tick-borne pathogens in human samples using DNA-based tests depends on the bacteria's distribution in the body. Testing your tick eliminates the uncertainty over the best sample to send and reduces false negative results by using the entire tick.

HOW IS THE TICK TESTED?

- Ticks are tested for the presence of bacterial genetic material (DNA) using polymerase chain reaction (PCR). PCR is highly specific to the fragment of DNA it is designed to detect and will not amplify DNA from other bacteria. If the result is positive, it means that the tick contained the pathogen. If the result is negative, it means that the tick was free of the pathogen. A positive result is not evidence of infection; that depends on the amount of bacteria in the tick and the length of time it was attached.

WHICH PATHOGENS SHOULD I TEST FOR?

In the DC area, the most prevalent tick-borne pathogens are: *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease), *Babesia microti* (babesiosis), and *Rickettsia rickettsii* (Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever). It is also recommended to test the tick for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis) and *Bartonella henselae* (cat scratch disease).

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY TICK?

1. Place the tick in a Ziplock bag or a tight sealing container. If the tick is alive use double bags to prevent escape.
2. DO NOT tape the tick, DO NOT include paper or cotton balls in the bag or container, and DO NOT submerge the tick in water or alcohol.
3. Label the bag or container with your name and phone number.
4. Send the tick via a reliable mail service such as USPS, UPS, or FedEx.



IS MY TICK TESTABLE?

In all likelihood, the answer is yes. Shredded, torn, soaked in alcohol, or even decades old ticks have been successfully tested in the past. However, if you have any questions or concerns, it is always best to contact the testing lab for more information.

WHERE SHOULD I SEND MY TICK?

Contact your local health department or a tick testing lab for further information. For a full list of labs visit natcaplyme.org.

For more information contact:

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