

Babesiosis

Fact Sheet



Department of Health
and Human Services

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Ricker Hamilton, Commissioner



Babesiosis is a disease caused by a parasite that infects the red blood cells. The most common way babesiosis spreads is by the bite of an infected *Ixodes scapularis* tick (also called the deer tick).

You can also get babesiosis through transfusion of contaminated blood. In rare instances, a mother can pass it to her child during pregnancy or delivery.

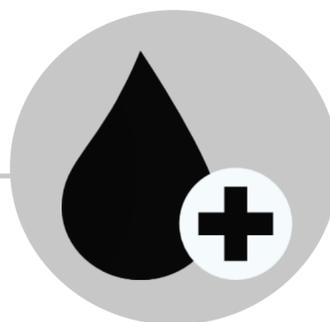


Anyone can get babesiosis, but people who spend time outside are at the highest risk. It is found most frequently in the elderly, in those without a healthy spleen, and in those with a weak immune system.

Signs and Symptoms



Fever



Anemia (Having a Lower Red Blood Cell Count Than Normal)



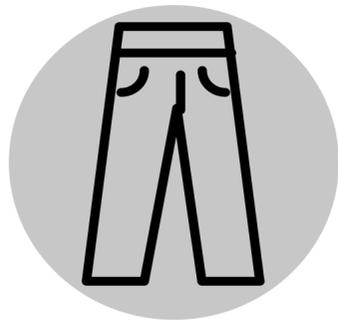
Fatigue (Feeling Very Tired)

These signs and symptoms typically last a few days to a few months and some people may not show any signs. Signs and symptoms can start within a few weeks, months, or sometimes longer.



Talk to your doctor if you have any of these signs or symptoms. Babesiosis is diagnosed based on signs and symptoms and confirmed through blood tests. Babesiosis is treated with antibiotics. Serious complications can occur if this disease is not recognized and treated early.

Preventing Tick Bites



Wear light colored, long-sleeved clothing. Tuck your pants into your socks.



Use an EPA approved bug spray.



Rake your leaves and keep your lawn mowed.



Do daily tick checks and check your pets too.

Safe Tick Removal



Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers to remove a tick.

-Using tweezers, grab the tick by its mouth and use firm, steady pressure to pull the tick out. Do not use twisting motions.

-Using a tick spoon, line the notch of the spoon up with the head of the tick and gently scoop.

Do not use nail polish, matches, or petroleum jelly to remove the tick. These methods increase the risk of localized skin infection.

Where are Deer Ticks Found in Maine?

Deer ticks, which can carry the parasites that cause babesiosis, are found everywhere in Maine. Areas where deer ticks live include:

- Wooded or forested areas
- Wild, unmaintained landscapes with high grass
- Brush or leaf piles

Ticks are active at any temperature above freezing.



For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/babesiosis
2. www.maine.gov/dhhs/tickfaq (For frequently asked tick questions)
3. www.cdc.gov/babesiosis
4. www.extension.umaine.edu/ipm/tickid/ (To submit a tick for identification)
5. www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you (For EPA approved repellents)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.