



Lyme Disease in Harford County

Harford County Health Department, Spring 2013



Public Health
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Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in Maryland. It is caused by the bite from an infected black-legged tick. Lyme disease cases are concentrated in the Northeast and upper Midwest of the United States (See Figure 1). In 2011, Maryland was one of 13 states that accounted for 96% of the reported cases of Lyme disease (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

The incidence of confirmed cases of Lyme disease by year in Maryland continually exceeds that of the nation. In 2011, the incidence of confirmed cases in Maryland was 16.1 per 100,000 persons, which was over two times the incidence nationwide (7.8 per 100,000 persons). However, the rate in Maryland decreased 48% between 2008 and 2011, as compared to only 17% nationwide (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

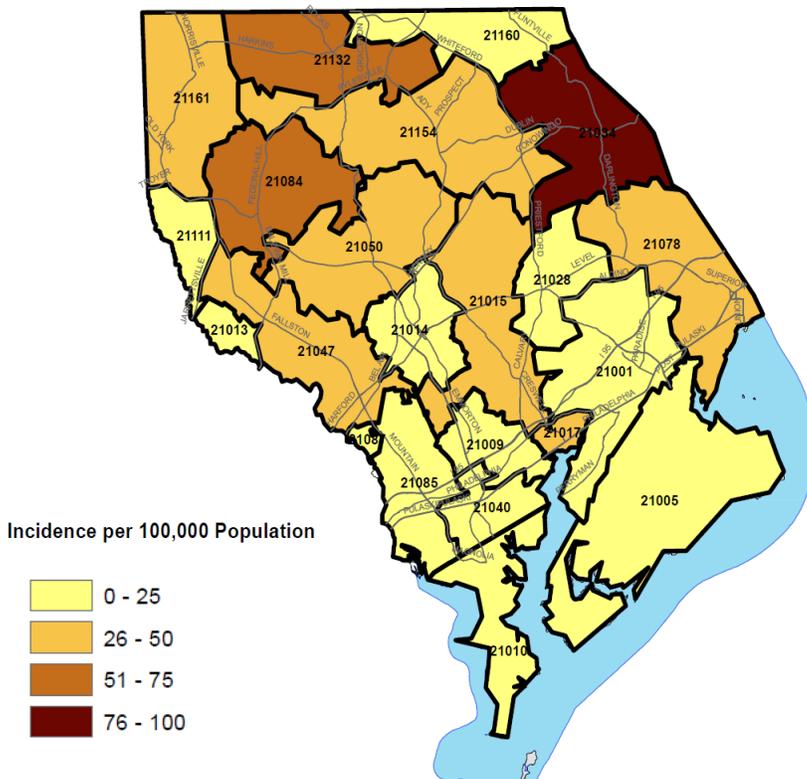
Figure 1

Reported Cases of Lyme Disease -- United States, 2011



Figure 2

Lyme Disease Incidences in Harford County by Zip Code, 2009-2011

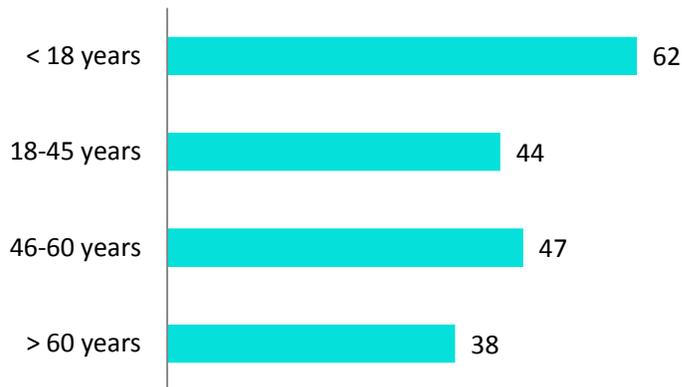


Harford County is an area of high incidence of Lyme disease. Between 2009 and 2011, the incidence of confirmed cases of Lyme disease was 26 per 100,000 persons, over three times the incidence nationwide. The highest rate was found in Darlington (21034), followed by Pylesville (21132) and Jarrettsville (21084) (See Figure 2).

During this time period, there were 191 confirmed, 92 probable and 107 suspected cases of Lyme disease county-wide (Harford County Health Department, Division of Communicable Disease, 2013).

Figure 3

Hanford County Confirmed Cases of Lyme Disease by Age, 2009-2011



Of the 191 confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Harford County between 2009 and 2011, the majority were reported among youth (See Figure 3). In addition, there was a slightly higher number of confirmed cases among males (59%) than females (41%) (Harford County Health Department, Division of Communicable Disease, 2013).

Ticks are most active in the late spring through early fall. Individuals are most likely to contract Lyme disease from being outside in their own backyard. Therefore, the following preventative steps are offered to residents to decrease their exposure to ticks.

- Avoid tick habitats, such as woods, marshy places, bushes, shrubs, leaf litter and tall grass
- Treat clothing with *permethrin*, a repellent/insecticide
- Use insect repellent containing 20-30% DEET on exposed skin
- Wear light colored clothing to help spot ticks more easily
- Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks, wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts
- Walk in the center of trails when in woods or high grass
- Talk to a veterinarian about tick control products for your pets
- ***Check for ticks daily after being in a tick habitat***

For more information about Lyme disease, such as signs, symptoms, treatment and tick removal, visit the Health Department's website at <http://www.harfordcountyhealth.com/?p=72>, and the State of Maryland's website at <http://ideha.dhmdh.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/SitePages/lyme-disease.aspx>.

The Harford County Health Department provides Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention presentations to interested civic, community, or religious organizations. If you are interested in scheduling a presentation, please contact the Health Department at 410-877-2300.

