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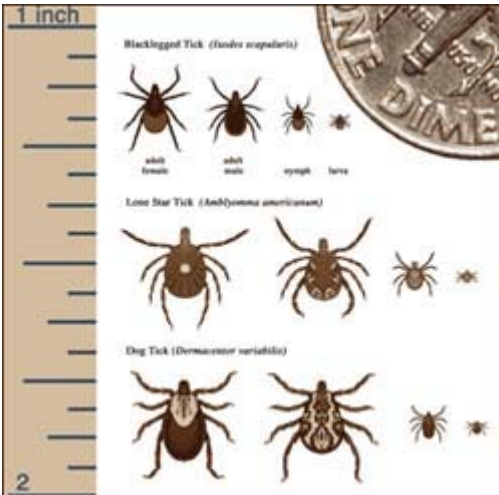
Preventing Tick Bites



When you're outside this spring and summer, prevent tick bites and reduce your risk of tick-borne disease by following these tips.

Gardening, camping, hiking, just playing outdoors – These are all great spring and summertime activities, but don't forget about the ticks that may be in the same environment. Fortunately there are several tactics you can use to prevent tick bites and reduce your risk of tick-borne disease.

Some of the more common diseases that you can get from a tick bite include (listed alphabetically):



- Babesiosis
- Ehrlichiosis
- Lyme disease
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI)
- Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Tularemia

Some species and some life stages of ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see, but all hungrily look for animals and people to bite. Depending on the species, you can find ticks in various environments, often in or near wooded areas. You may come into contact with ticks when walking through infested areas or by brushing up against infested vegetation (such as leaf litter or shrubs). Ticks also feed on mammals and birds, which play a role in maintaining ticks and the pathogens they carry.

Tick-borne diseases can occur worldwide. Fortunately, there are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

Protect Yourself from Tick Bites

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in moist and humid environments, particularly in or near wooded or grassy areas. You may come into contact with ticks during outdoor activities around your home or when walking through vegetation such as leaf litter or shrubs. Always walk in the center of trails, in order to avoid ticks.

- **Use a repellent with DEET** (on skin or clothing) **or permethrin** (on clothing) and wear long sleeves, long pants and socks. Products containing permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear which can remain protective through several washings. Repellents containing 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) can be applied to the skin, and they can protect up to several hours. **Always follow product instructions!** Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding the hands, eyes and mouth.

- **Wear light-colored clothing**, which allows you to see ticks crawling on your clothing.

- **Tuck your pant legs into your socks** so that ticks cannot crawl up inside of your pant legs. Some ticks can crawl down into shoes and are small enough to crawl through most socks. When traveling in areas with lone star ticks (which are associated with Southern tick-associated rash illness, ehrlichiosis and possibly Rocky Mountain spotted fever) you should examine your feet and ankles to ensure that ticks are not attached.

Perform Daily Tick Checks

Check your body for ticks after being outdoors, even in your own yard. Conduct a body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas by searching your entire body for ticks. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body and remove any tick you find. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:

- Under the arms
- In and around the ears
- Inside belly button
- Back of the knees
- Under the arms
- In and around the hair
- Between the legs
- Around the waist

Check your children for ticks, especially in the hair, when returning from potentially tick-infested areas. See the list above for the places on your child's body to check for ticks. Remove any tick you find on your child's body.

Check your clothing and pets for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing and pets. Both should be examined carefully and any ticks that are found should be removed. Placing clothes into a dryer on high heat effectively kills ticks.

What to Do If You Are Bitten by a Tick

Remove an attached tick as soon as you notice it. Watch for signs of illness such as rash or fever and see a health care provider if these develop.

Your risk of acquiring a tick-borne illness depends on many factors, including where you live, what type of tick bit you and how long the tick was attached. If you become ill after a tick bite, see a health care provider.

Reduce Ticks in Your Yard



This landscaping diagram shows ways to create tick-safe zones in your yard. (Image courtesy Kirby Stafford III, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station)

- **Modify your landscape to create Tick-Safe Zones.** To do this, keep play areas and playground equipment away from shrubs, bushes, and other vegetation. Also, regularly remove leaf litter and clear tall grasses and brush around homes, and place wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to keep ticks away from recreational areas.

- **Provide a vegetation-free play area.** Keep play areas and playground equipment away from shrubs, bushes and other vegetation.

- **Use a chemical control agent.** Effective tick control chemicals are available for use by the homeowner, or they can be applied by a professional pest control expert, and even limited applications can greatly reduce the number of ticks. A single springtime application of acaricide can reduce the population of ticks by 68–100%.

- **Discourage deer.** Removing plants that attract deer and constructing physical barriers may help discourage deer from entering your yard and bringing ticks with them.

Prevent Ticks on Animals

Prevent family pets from bringing ticks into the home. Maintain your family pet under a veterinarian's care. Two of the ways to get rid of ticks on dogs and cats are putting on tick medicine or using a tick collar. Be sure to use these products according to the package instructions.

Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control web page www.cdc.gov