

Stop Ticks

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
- Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Tularemia



Other diseases that you can get from a tick in the United States include anaplasmosis, Colorado tick fever, and Powassan encephalitis.

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

- **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.

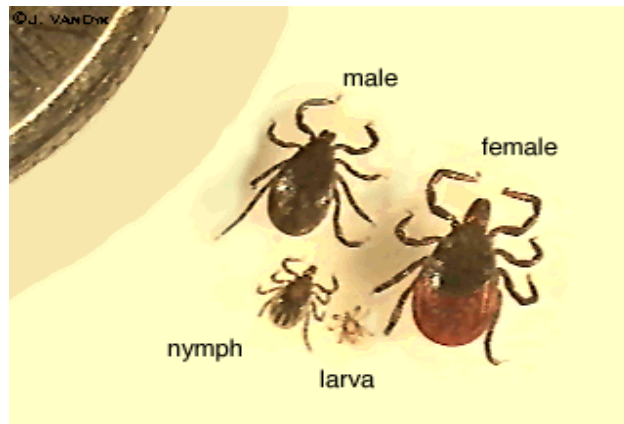
- **Avoid tick-infested areas.** If you are in a tick-infested area, walk in the center of the trails to avoid contact with vegetation.

For detailed information about using DEET on children, see [West Nile Virus: What You Need to Know about Mosquito Repellent](#). For detailed information about tick prevention and control, see [Lyme Disease Prevention and Control](#).

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. See the "[Prevent ticks on animals](#)" section of this page for more information.

Watch for signs of illness such as rash or fever, and see a health care provider if these develop. For fully detailed information about tick removal, see the [Rocky Mountain spotted fever Web site](#).

Reduce Ticks in Your Yard

- **Modify your landscape to create [Tick-Safe Zones](#).**
- **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.
- **Use bait boxes to treat rodents.** Properly used, these boxes have been shown to reduce deer ticks around homes by more than 50%. The treatment is similar to products used to control ticks and fleas on pets and does not harm the rodents.
- **Prevent deer from bringing ticks into your yard.** Removing plants that attract deer and constructing physical barriers may help discourage tick-infested deer from coming near homes.

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. For more information on animals and health, see the CDC [Healthy Pets, Healthy People](#) Web site.