





Ticks

Preventing tick bites

Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during warmer months (April-September). Know which ticks are most common in your area.

Before You Go Outdoors

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.
- **Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin.** Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
- **Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents**  containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. EPA's helpful search tool  can help you find the product that best suits your needs. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old.
- **Avoid Contact with Ticks**
 - Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
 - Walk in the center of trails.

After You Come Indoors

Check your clothing for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.

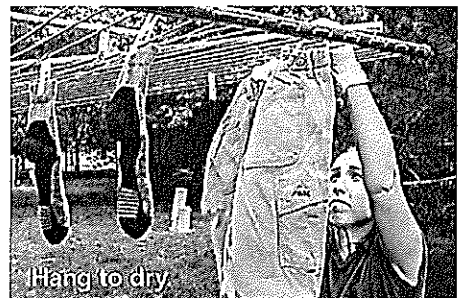
Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and daypacks.

Shower soon after being outdoors. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.

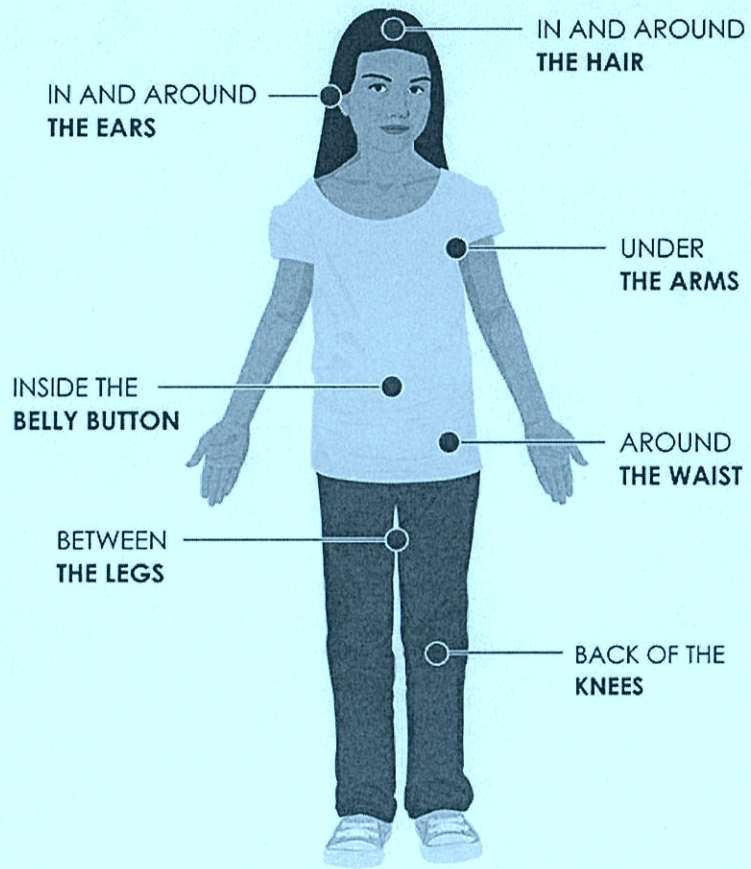
Check your body for ticks after being outdoors. Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:

- Under the arms
- In and around the ears
- Inside belly button
- Back of the knees
- In and around the hair

TREAT CLOTHING WITH PERMETHRIN



- Between the legs
- Around the waist





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Tick Removal



Tick Bite Bot

A tool to assist people in removing attached ticks and seeking health care, if appropriate, after a tick bite.

[Get Started](#)

[About the Tool](#)

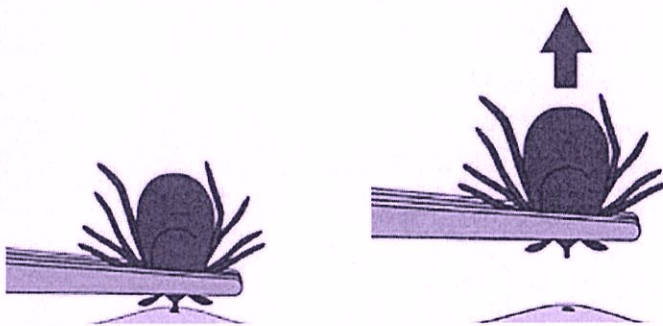
Removing a tick

Testing of ticks

If you find a tick attached to your skin, simply remove the tick as soon as possible. There are several tick removal devices on the market, but a plain set of fine-tipped tweezers works very well.

How to remove a tick

1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
4. Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of a live tick by
 - Putting it in alcohol,
 - Placing it in a sealed bag/container,
 - Wrapping it tightly in tape, or
 - Flushing it down the toilet.



Follow-up

If you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor:

- Tell the doctor about your recent tick bite,
- When the bite occurred, and
- Where you most likely acquired the tick.


People who have removed a tick sometimes wonder if they should have it tested for evidence of infection. Although some commercial groups offer testing, in general this is not recommended because:

- Laboratories that conduct tick testing are not required to have the high standards of quality control used by clinical diagnostic laboratories. Results of tick testing should not be used for treatment decisions.
- Positive results showing that the tick contains a disease-causing organism do not necessarily mean that you have been infected.
- Negative results can lead to false assurance. You may have been unknowingly bitten by a different tick that was infected.
- If you have been infected, you will probably develop symptoms before results of the tick test are available. If you do become ill, you should not wait for tick testing results before beginning appropriate treatment.

However, you may want to learn to identify various ticks. Different ticks live in different parts of the country and transmit different diseases.



Avoid folklore remedies such as “painting” the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. Your goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible—not waiting for it to detach.

Fact Sheet—What to do after a tick bite  [PDF – 2 pages]



Ticks

Symptoms of Tickborne Illness

Many tickborne diseases can have similar signs and symptoms. If you get a tick bite and develop the symptoms below within a few weeks, see your healthcare provider.

The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses include:

- **Fever/chills.** All tickborne diseases can cause fever.
- **Aches and pains.** Tickborne diseases can cause headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. People with Lyme disease may also have joint pain.
- **Rash.** Lyme disease, Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI), Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF), ehrlichiosis, and tularemia can cause distinctive rashes.

Your healthcare provider should evaluate the following before deciding on a plan for treatment:

- Your symptoms,
- the geographic region where you were bitten, and
- lab tests, depending on the symptoms and the geographic region where you were bitten.



Tick paralysis is thought to be caused by a toxin in the saliva of an attached tick. People with tick paralysis can experience weakness or paralysis that gradually moves up the body. These symptoms can sometimes resemble other neurologic conditions (for example, Guillain-Barré syndrome or botulism). Patients typically regain movement within 24 hours of removing the tick. Learn more at [Tick paralysis: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia](#).