

TICKS FACTS, ID, PREVENTION

Some of these facts will not be easy to read, but they are important things to know, if you enjoy the outdoors. Being prepared is always a good thing.



Although the number of tick species is in the hundreds, there are relatively few ticks that interact with mankind and domestic animals causing harm. Ticks generally are not born with disease agents but rather acquire them during various feedings. They then pass the disease on to other animals and mankind during subsequent feedings. When an infection moves from an animal host to a human it is called zoonosis. Lyme disease, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis and tularemia are examples of such diseases.

During the last several years, about 75 percent of the ticks submitted to State staff have been identified either as the American dog tick or as the Lone star tick. In order to investigate whether specific human behavior increases the risk of tick exposure, researchers from the University of California at Berkeley took to the woods. They found that sitting on a log carried with it the greatest risk of picking up a tick. If you sit on a log (at least in Northern California) for only five minutes, you have a 30% chance of getting a tick on you! Gathering wood was also cited as a risky activity as well as leaning up against a tree.

AMERICAN DOG TICK

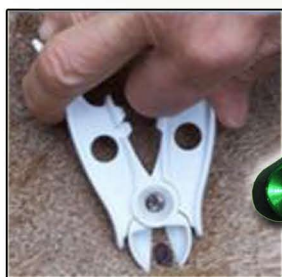


The best tick repellent designed for human use is the synthetic chemical called Permethrin. It is marketed under different brand names and sold over the counter. Not surprisingly, Permethrin is the very tick repellent the military use as well. Another effective tick repellent is DEET or N,N-Diethyl-meta-toluamide. You can also find DEET as an active ingredient in popular tick/mosquito repellents

LONE STAR TICK



2 KINDS OF TICK REMOVERS



1 inch

BLACKLEGGED TICK

adult female adult male nymph larve

LONE STAR TICK

AMERICAN DOG TICK

2

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The same repellents used for TICKS can be used for Mosquitoes, Chiggers and other insects that can be a nuisance or harmful to you while in the outdoors. Applying a Repellent is a good way to start your outdoor experience.



The best way to protect yourself against tickborne illness is to avoid tick bites. This includes avoiding known tick-infested areas. However, if you live in or visit wooded areas or areas with tall grass and weeds, follow these precautions to help prevent tick bites and decrease the risk of disease:

- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, boots or sturdy shoes and a head covering. (Ticks are easier to detect on light-colored clothing.) Tuck trouser cuffs in socks. Tape the area where pants and socks meet so ticks cannot crawl under clothing.

- Apply insect repellent containing 10 percent to 30 percent DEET primarily to clothes. Apply sparingly to exposed skin. Do not spray directly to the face; spray the repellent onto hands and then apply to face. Avoid sensitive areas like the eyes, mouth and nasal membranes. Be sure to wash treated skin after coming indoors. Use repellents containing permethrin to treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) but not skin. Always follow label directions; do not misuse or overuse repellents. Always supervise children in the use of repellents.

- Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you. In camping areas, individuals who sit on the ground or disturb leaf litter on the forest floor may encounter ticks.

- Check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks. Most ticks seldom attach quickly and rarely transmit disease organisms until they have been attached four or more hours. If your pets spend time outdoors, check them for ticks, too.

- If ticks are crawling on the outside of clothes, they can be removed with masking tape or cellophane tape. A ring of tape can be made around the hand by leaving the sticky side out and attaching the two ends. Ticks will stick to the tape which can then be folded over and then placed in the trash.

- Remove any tick promptly. The mouthparts of a tick are barbed and may remain embedded and lead to infection at the bite site if not removed promptly. Do not burn the tick with a match or cover it with petroleum jelly or nail polish. Do not use bare hands to remove the tick because tick secretions may carry disease. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it firmly with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick. If tweezers are not available, grasp the tick with a piece of tissue or cloth or whatever can be used as a barrier between your fingers and the tick. Ticks can be safely disposed of by placing them in a container of soapy water or alcohol, sticking them to tape or flushing them down the toilet. If you want to have the tick identified, put it in a small vial of alcohol.

- Wash the bite area & your hands thoroughly with soap & water and apply an antiseptic to the bite site.

- If you have an unexplained illness with fever, contact a physician. Be sure to tell the physician if you have been outdoors in areas where ticks were present or traveled to areas where tickborne diseases are common.

WHEN TO CONTACT A PHYSICIAN

If you experience a rash that looks like a bull's-eye, or a rash anywhere on the body or an unexplained illness accompanied by fever following a tick bite, you should consult your physician and explain that you were bitten by a tick. Disease carried by ticks can be treated with antibiotics. However, the type of antibiotic can vary and individuals should be treated early in the infection.

