

Avoiding tick bites is the best way to reduce your risk of developing a tickborne illness. The following personal tick bite prevention tips are recommended when exposure to a wooded or tick infested area is likely. Be extra careful during warmer months when ticks are most active. The following topics cover various methods to prevent infection with a tickborne illness.

## Clothing Choice

- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to see.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks to deprive ticks of attachment sites.
- Wear closed-toe shoes, not sandals.

## Tick Repellant

### DEET

- Use a tick repellant with DEET on skin and clothing (according to directions).
- Repellants containing 20% or more DEET can be applied to the skin and can provide protection from ticks up to several hours.
- Parents should apply product to their children being careful to avoid the hands, eyes, and mouth.

### PERMETHRIN

- Use a tick repellant with permethrin **ON CLOTHING ONLY** (as directed by the label).
- Permethrin-treated clothes will repel or kill ticks upon contact.

## Check for Ticks!

- Perform **DAILY** tick checks (especially waistbands, armpits, groin area, back, scalp, and hair).
- Shower soon after being outdoors.
- Check your children for ticks.
- Hikers and bikers should stay in the center of trails to avoid grass and brush.

## Tick Removal Tips

The risk of contracting a tickborne illness increases the longer the tick stays attached, so ticks should be removed as quickly as possible. It is very important, however, to remove the tick appropriately. **It is important to remember these tips when removing ticks from yourself or your pets.**

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers for tick removal. If tweezers are not available, cover your fingers with a tissue (or similar material) to grab the tick.
2. Grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible.
3. Pull the tick from the skin with a gentle, steady upward pressure, trying not to twist or jerk the tick as you pull.
4. Wash the bite area and your hands with **WARM, SOAPY** water when finished removing the tick.

Also remember to **NOT** squeeze the body of the tick at any time while it is attached or after you remove it as you can release harmful bacteria into the bite wound or onto your skin. Sometimes a small red welt may be present on the skin where the tick was attached. This is generally due to localized irritation from the tick's saliva and can be expected to resolve in 1-2 days. **DO NOT** use matches, gasoline, nail polish remover, or other ointments as methods of tick removal.

Note the date of tick removal and where you most likely acquired the tick. Report any symptoms consistent with tickborne illnesses (e.g. fever, headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes, muscle/joint pain) that occur within two weeks of the tick bite to your physician immediately.

Preventing ticks on your family pets though use of tick medicine or tick collar is important to keep the pet from bringing ticks into the home.

