

# Tick Bite Facts

## Avoiding Tick Bites

- Stay on trails outdoors; avoid areas of overgrown brush and tall grasses.
- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks can be easily seen.
- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, closed toe shoes with socks, and a hat. Tuck your pants into your socks and your shirt into your pants.
- Check yourself, your children, and your pets often for ticks, shower after returning indoors.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET or permethrin (always follow directions).
- After returning indoors, run clothes in the dryer on high heat to kill any ticks that may be on the clothing.



Tick-borne diseases are transmitted to people and animals when they are bitten by an infected tick. The longer an attached tick is allowed to feed, the greater the chance the tick will transmit the organisms that cause tick-borne diseases. Therefore, it is important to take steps to avoid being bitten by ticks and to remove any attached ticks promptly. This fact sheet contains some tips on how to avoid being bitten by ticks, how to do a tick check, and how to properly remove an attached tick.

## How to Do a Tick Check

Black-legged ticks are very small, and a tick might look like a freckle or speck of dirt on a person's skin. Ticks often like to bite in warm, dark, secluded areas of the body. It is important to check your clothing for ticks while you are outside, and do a whole body tick check at least once a day. Pay close attention to: hairline and scalp, in and around ears, underarms, elbows, backs of the knees, between fingers and toes, belly button, groin area, and areas where clothing presses against your skin (for example: waistbands, collars, cuffs, watchbands). Don't forget to check your pets as well! Remove any attached ticks promptly.

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### Removing an Attached Tick

- **DO** remove the tick promptly. The sooner you remove it, the less chance of infection.
- **DO** use tweezers to grasp the tick's mouthparts at the surface of the skin.
- **DO** gently pull the tick straight out with a steady motion.
- **DO** wipe the bite area with an antiseptic, or wash with soap and water.
- **DO NOT** remove an attached tick using any of the methods listed below. These may actually increase your chances of becoming infected with a tick borne disease:
  - **DO NOT** squeeze the tick.
  - **DO NOT** rub petroleum jelly on the tick.
  - **DO NOT** use a hot match or cigarette.
  - **DO NOT** pour kerosene or nail polish on the tick.



### Is it a tick bite?

- **Spider bite:** Several fluid-filled bumps appear at the site of the bite.
- **Tick bite:** The bite may be hard, itchy, and may be reddish and form into lumps. In many people infected with Lyme disease, a red, circular, spreading rash develops at the site of the tick bite. This is often known as a "bulls eye rash" because some clearing often develops in the center of the circular rash, resembling a bulls eye.
- A rash is not a symptom of all tick-borne diseases, and not all people infected with Lyme disease develop rashes. It is important to speak to your physician or primary care provider if you have any concerns following a tick bite or if you experience any symptoms of disease.

