

Check, Check, Check for Ticks!

Here is a checklist of ways to prevent tick bites and still enjoy the outdoors:

Avoid tick-infested areas!

Walk in the center of trails to avoid ticks on brush. Ticks can be active even on winter days when the ground temperature is 45^o Fahrenheit and above.

Dress properly!

Light-colored clothing helps you spot ticks more easily. Wear long pants and long sleeves and tuck the shirt into your pants and the pants into your socks to keep ticks on the outside of your clothes and off your skin.

Use insect repellent!

Repellants discourage tick attachment. You must read the product label to find out how long the formula will last. Repellents containing DEET can be applied to the skin and clothing, but will last only a few hours before reapplication is necessary. Repellents containing permethrin can be sprayed on boots and clothing, and will last for several days. Do not apply permethrin directly to skin, and always follow label directions when using any repellent.

Do Tick Checks!

When you're outdoors, even in your own yard, check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks. Do this by looking at their clothes and by running your fingers over scalp and skin, looking for small bumps or new "moles". Don't forget your hair, ears, and underarms. At night, use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body.

Remove attached ticks immediately!

It is rare for a tick to infect someone until it has been attached for more than four hours. Use fine-point tweezers to grasp the tick around its mouthparts, at the place of attachment next to the skin. Slowly pull the tick away from the skin until the tick is removed. Place the tick in a sealed container or small plastic bag and deposit in the trash. After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash your hands with soap and water. If you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately.

Tweezers or Tick Removal Tools – Don't Leave Home Without Them!

A study from Ohio State University suggests that commercial tick removal tools are very effective for removing adult ticks, although the deeply attached mouthparts of the Lone Star Ticks sometimes were not completely removed. Another study from this laboratory tested several popular "folk" methods (fingernail polish, petroleum jelly, a glowing hot match, and rubbing alcohol) for their ability to induce ticks to "back out" or release from the host. Not one of these techniques initiated tick self-detachment in adult lone star or American dog ticks!