



Tick Safety

It's deer tick season again and this year is predicted to be a dangerous one in Vermont. We need to be careful because ticks can carry Lyme Disease, a chronic and often debilitating bacterial infection. The best way to avoid Lyme disease is to avoid deer tick bites.

Ticks unfortunately like to feed on humans. They like humid wooded and brushy areas, especially if there is a lot of tall grass or leaf litter. Take extra precautions in May, June, and July, this is when most infections occur.

Protect yourself when in the woods

- Wear long sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Tuck your pants into your socks. This will prevent ticks from getting under your clothes.
- Wear closed toed shoes. No sandals or bare feet.
- Wear light colored clothing helps you spot ticks easily. A hat is a good idea too.
- Wear insect repellent. It can treat skin and clothing. Pay particular attention to legs and socks
- If you do go into a tick area, walk in the center of the trail. Do not bush wack through tall grass, bushes or areas with lots of old leaves and organic debris
- **To avoid ticks** when walking in wooded or grassy areas; avoid tall grass, avoid areas frequented by deer and walk in the center of trails.

Daily Tick Checks

- *It is important to do whole body tick checks at least once a day.*
- Check as soon as possible after being in grassy or brushy areas, including back yards
 - Search your entire body for ticks especially places ticks hide: Under your arms, in and around your ears, inside your belly button, back of your knees, under your arms, in your hair and around your waist. Some ticks can crawl into shoes and are small enough to crawl through your socks.
- Shower after all outdoor activities are over for the day. If the tick is still wandering it may wash off.
- Clothing can be put into a hot dryer for at least 15 minutes. Ticks can survive the washing machine, but are killed by hot dry air.
- Check your pets for ticks too.

Tick Removal

If you do find an attached tick there's no need to panic. ***The most important thing is to remove it immediately.*** You can use one of the many tick removal tools or just use a pair of fine-nosed tweezers. **“Get it right next to the skin and pull up steadily and remove the tick. Do not squeeze the body transmission of the bacteria.** Then you can wash the area just to prevent any secondary infections

When to call a doctor

If the tick was attached to the skin, keep the tick in a baggie and notify your doctor.

We are aware here at school of the need to allow children access to the outdoors while remaining vigilant of their safety. Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases can be devastating with great losses of function and ability. I have spoken with staff about being aware of children when coming in from the outdoors.

Interesting Vt. Department of Health:

<https://apps.health.vermont.gov/vttracking/TickTracker/2016Summary/>