



**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

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Hats ON for Safety

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Staying Healthy During Tick Season

Many of us have had the unpleasant experience of finding a tick attached to some part of our body, especially after a day of working or playing outside. It's a creepy and startling situation that requires some savvy intervention.

Outdoor workers face a health threat of Lyme Disease spread by ticks. Landscaping, brush clearing, forestry work, parks and wildlife management are some of the occupa-

tions that are most at risk for tick bites. Home gardeners, hikers and others who spend their free time outdoors are exposed to the hazard, too.

The Ambush at Tick Pass

Ticks lurk in low lying brush or trees and drop on passing animals or people. They feed off the blood of their hosts like little vampires. Nobody knows for sure how long a tick can wait for a host to wander by, but ticks have been kept in captivity without food for up



to three years. They have also endured near freezing temperatures and submersion for 160 days.

Know the Danger.

The tick is a tiny, eight-legged, insect-like creature that feeds on the blood of animals including human beings. While it is mostly harmless, it spreads the bacteria responsible for Lyme Disease. The deer tick, which is

the main carrier, is about the size of the dot at the end of this sentence.



Keep 'Em Off

- Try to avoid areas (long grass, wooded locations) that ticks are likely to inhabit.
- Wear boots or other

proper footwear.

- Wear long pants that cover your legs.
- Cover your arms and leave as little skin exposed as possible.

- Tuck pant legs into high boots and tape the area where pants and socks meet.

- Apply insecticide with DEET and apply to pant legs and socks, too. This is where ticks will likely attach.

Personal Inspection

It's important to get into the habit of personal inspection after you spend time outdoors. Once indoors, remove clothing and check your body thoroughly for ticks that are running loose or already attached. Places to check include under your arms, between your legs, behind the knees, around your ears, in your hair, inside your belly button and around your waist. Never allow more than four to eight hours to pass without a thorough tick inspection. Make this a regular habit, particularly when you are in tick-infested areas.



Carriers of Disease

So why all the fuss about ticks? They can transmit big diseases including: Lyme Disease; Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Ehrlichiosis.

Symptoms include flu like symptoms—fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, nausea and vomiting. A rash may accompany the symptoms which can occur between one and 30 days of being bitten. Some ticks, such as the Rocky Mountain wood tick and the American dog tick, can cause paralysis in humans and animals. While the tick feeds on the host's blood, it injects a toxin that attacks the nervous system. The only treatment is the immediate and careful removal of the tick.



Some information for this newsletter was taken from safetyxchange.org; safetysmartonline.

How to Remove a Tick

To minimize the risk of disease transmission, ticks must be removed immediately. But removing a tick is difficult. When a tick starts to feed, its salivary secretions form a sort of chemical glue that will only be removed when a tick is finished feeding and releases another chemical to dissolve this glue.

► **First some thing you should NOT do:**

Vaseline Submersion: It's widely believed that if you somehow smother a tick with Vaseline or fingernail polish, it will suffocate and let go of its host. But if a tick can survive submersion for 160 days, then trying to smother it is a waste of time.

Burning: Some people believe that a tick can be burned off your skin by using a hot match. Don't try it. Not only will you destroy the body of the

tick, (which you need to grab onto to remove) but you also risk burning yourself.

► **Here's what you should do:**

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick close to the point where the tick is attached to the skin;
- Pull firmly and steadily until the tick is removed;
- Avoid squashing the tick during removal, as infected blood may spread to the victim;
- Apply an anti-septic to the bite area, and wash your hands with soap and water.

Dispose of the dislodged tick by dropping in in alcohol or crushing it with the heel of your shoe or between two rocks. Don't squash the tick between your fingers—this may expose you to the very diseases you're trying to avoid.

Penn State Pointers ► **Lyme Disease: Be Safe, Not Sorry**

THE SAFEST WAY TO REMOVE A TICK...
Grip its mouth parts as close to your skin surface as possible using surgical tweezers.
Pull the tick out slowly and steadily to avoid releasing or allowing tweezers to slip off parts.

CAUTION: Other removal methods could result in ticks emptying their stomach contents and disease bacteria into the bloodstream.

Removing Ticks to Prevent Lyme Disease ...

- Experts believe ticks have to be attached to the host at least 24 hours to transmit Lyme disease — unless they are improperly removed.
- Carry surgical tweezers in all your first-aid kits.
- Save removed ticks for testing—in case Lyme disease symptoms develop.
- Seek medical attention if red circular rashes or any 'flu-like' symptoms appear.

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