

Ticks

Ticks are spider-like insects that bite into the skin and feed on blood. Most ticks do not carry disease and most tick bites do not cause serious health problems. Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever are two diseases spread by ticks that affect humans causing flu-like symptoms including fever, headache and muscle aches.

Ticks are more prevalent in the summer months. Ticks do not jump, fly or fall from trees. A pet or person will brush vegetation where a tick is present, the tick transfers to the lower leg and then crawls to a feeding spot.

Prevention

- **Checking for ticks and prompt removal is probably the most important and effective method of preventing transmission of infection from ticks.**
- Wear light colored long pants and sleeves when working, playing outdoors or hiking. Pant legs should be tucked into the socks or boots.
- After being outdoors or hiking remove clothing, then wash and dry the clothes. Ticks may survive a warm water wash but a hot dryer for one hour will kill most ticks.
- Avoid open toe shoes or sandals when hiking, working or playing in vegetated areas
- Wear a tick repellent that is permethrin or DEET based.
- Keep to the center of a trail when hiking to minimize contact with vegetation
- Inspect entire body and remove ticks after being outdoors.
- Check pets and remove ticks promptly.

Tick Removal

- If a tick is on your skin, cleanse the area with an antiseptic just prior to removal.
- With clean tweezers or forceps grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pull straight out with steady even pressure. **DO NOT** use petroleum jelly, heat from matches, gasoline or other chemicals to remove a tick.
- Do not touch the tick directly with your hands or crush the tick in order to reduce disease transmission.
- Wash the skin after removal and apply topical antibiotic or antiseptic to the area.

- Save the tick in a small clear plastic vial for tests in case you develop flu-like symptoms.
- Note the site and date of the bite on calendar.
- Localized red reactions are common and usually disappear in 24-48 hours.

Consult a Physician if you:

- develop a rash that spreads. This rash may feel hot and itchy. The rash may occur from 3-30 days after the bite.
- develop a fever 102-105F within 2 weeks from the bite.
- have constant fatigue and malaise.
- experience an excruciating headache.
- have muscle/joint aches and pains.
- are immunocompromised from another illness.

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