



## Information about Ticks

Ticks are among the most efficient carriers of disease because they attach firmly when sucking blood, feed slowly and may go unnoticed for a considerable time while feeding. Ticks take several days to complete feeding. Although at least 15 species of ticks occur in Illinois, only a few of these ticks are likely to be encountered by people: American dog tick, lone star tick, blacklegged (deer) tick, and the brown dog tick.

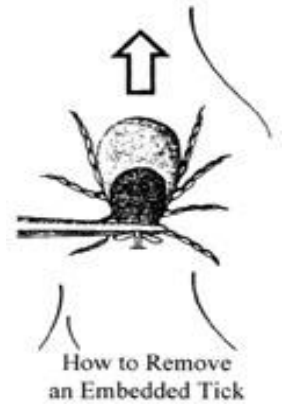
- **American Dog Tick:** In Illinois, the adults are most active in April, May and June. The American dog tick can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia to humans.
- **Lone Star Tick:** The lone star tick is primarily found in the southern half of Illinois, although it can occasionally be found further north. The lone star tick is most active from April through the end of July. Although it can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever, the lone star tick is not as likely to transmit the disease as the American dog tick.
- **Blacklegged Deer Tick:** These ticks are found in wooded areas along trails. The blacklegged/deer tick can transmit Lyme disease to humans. The deer tick has been found in many Illinois counties, however, in recent years it has been common only in limited areas in northern Illinois.
- **Brown Dog Tick:** The brown dog tick is found through most of the U.S. This tick feeds on dogs, but rarely bites people. The brown dog tick is not an important carrier of human disease.

**Preventing Tick Bites and Disease:** It is impossible by sight to determine which ticks could be a carrier of a disease, so it is important to avoid tick bites when in areas where ticks may be present. Ticks do not jump or fly, they climb or “drop” onto their host. When brushed by a moving animal or person, they let go of the weed or tall grass they are on and climb onto the host. The risk of tick exposure is greatest in wooded areas, but ticks can also be carried by animals into houses by pets.

Taking the following precautions will reduce your chance of tick bites:

- **Check yourself, children and pets for ticks daily (include areas under clothes and hair) and as often as every 2-3 hours when in wooded areas.**
- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, boots or sturdy shoes and a head covering. (Ticks are easier to detect on light-colored clothing.) Tuck trouser cuffs in socks.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET (20-30%).. Do not apply to the face. Be sure to wash hands after applying repellent. Always follow label directions; do not misuse or overuse repellents. **Always supervise children in the use of repellents.**
- Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you. In camping areas, individuals who sit on the ground or disturb leaf litter on the forest floor may encounter ticks.
- After being outdoors, be sure and wash treated skin with repellent. Remove clothing and wash and dry at a high temperature.

- If ticks are crawling on the outside of clothes, they can be removed with masking tape or cellophane tape. A ring of tape can be made around the hand by leaving the sticky side out and attaching the two ends. Ticks will stick to the tape, which can then be folded over and then placed in the trash.
- **Remove any tick promptly.**
  - Do not use bare hands to remove the tick as secretions may carry disease.
  - If using a tweezers, grasp the tick firmly with the tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull straight out.
  - Be careful not to squeeze or crush the body of the tick due to possible infectious fluids.
  - If a tick remover or tweezers is not available, grasp the tick with a piece of tissue.
  - Sometimes the head of the tick will remain under the skin after the body is removed. The McHenry County Department of Health states the tick can no longer spread disease if this happens.
  - Wash the area with soap and water and use disinfectant on the bite site. Clean the tick removal tool or tweezers with alcohol.
  - Place the tick in a plastic bag with a seal for possible identification if needed. Ticks can be identified at the McHenry County Department of Health of University of Illinois Extension Office in Woodstock.



***When to Contact A Doctor:***

- If you or your child have an unexplained illness with fever following a tick bite or an unexplained fever after being outdoors where ticks are present.
- If you or your child experiences a rash that looks like a “bulls eye” or unexplained rash anywhere on the body.

We wish you a fun and safe summer!