

A woman with long blonde hair is shown from the side, spraying insect repellent from a white bottle onto her arm. She is wearing a purple and white patterned top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage.

TICK PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Although some effective therapies are available for Lyme disease and other tickborne diseases, preventative measures remain the best approach. Ticks are most active during the warmer months of the year. In Wisconsin, preventive measures are especially needed during the months of April through October.

People spending time outdoors include campers, anglers, hikers, hunters, farmers, and people in outdoor occupations; they may be more likely to encounter ticks and therefore are at a higher risk of acquiring tickborne diseases.

Personal Protection

Repellents

Use effective tick repellents and apply according to the label instructions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults use repellents with 20%-30% DEET on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. Permethrin is also effective against ticks and lasts for days to weeks, but should only be applied to clothes and **not** directly to the skin.

Clothing

Wear long sleeves, long pants, and long socks to keep ticks on the outside of clothing. Light colored clothing will help you spot ticks. Tuck shirts into pants and pants into shoes or socks. If you are outdoors for an extended period of time, tape pants legs where pants and socks meet so that ticks cannot crawl under clothes.

Tick Avoidance

If possible, avoid wooded and bushy areas that contain high grass and leaf litter.

If you do go into wooded areas, stay in the center of a cleared trail to avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter.

To help control the spread of infection from ticks, maintain the vegetation around your home. Take precautions to avoid ticks by reducing areas with high, tall grass surrounding your home. Ticks are commonly found in these areas.

Tick Control

- Clear overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter from the premises or trails.
- Use wood chips or gravel as a barrier between lawns and wooded areas.
- Mow lawns frequently and remove cut grass and leaves.
- Keep tables, swing sets, play equipment, etc., away from woods, shrubs, and tall grass. Place in a sunny location, if possible.
- Discourage deer intrusion by constructing barriers and not feeding them.
- Remove woodpiles, or stack wood neatly in dry areas away from houses to prevent rodent harborage.
- Acaracides (pesticides that kill ticks) may be helpful to use during spring, but a professional pesticide company should be consulted prior to use.
- Apply pesticides outdoors to control ticks. For more information, visit the Environmental Protection Agency's Pesticide Safety site (Appendix B).
- The Environmental Protection Agency and each state have different rules and regulations related to pesticide application on residential properties; identify these before pesticide application.
- Consider hiring a professional pesticide company.

Body Check and Tick Removal

Check your body for ticks after being outdoors. Inspect all body parts carefully, especially the armpits, scalp, and groin. Remove any ticks from clothing, gear, and pets before going inside.

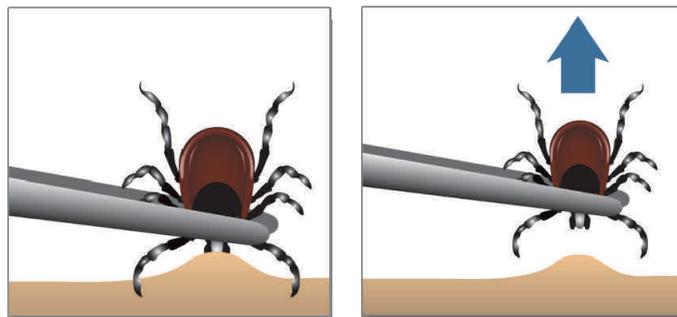
Take a shower or bath as soon as possible to wash off any ticks that still might be on your body. Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks.

To remove an attached tick:

- Grasp it with narrow-bladed tweezers or forceps as close as possible to attachment (skin) site.
- Pull upward and out with a firm and steady tension. If tweezers are not available, use fingers shielded with tissue paper or rubber gloves. Do not handle the tick with bare hands. Be careful not to squeeze, crush, or puncture the tick, as it may contain infectious fluids.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site, and wash hands.
- Avoid folklore remedies such as “painting” the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. Your goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible—not wait for it to detach.

If you develop a rash or fever and other symptoms described above within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor. Be sure to tell the doctor about your recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where you most likely acquired the tick.

HOW TO REMOVE A TICK Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Wisconsin Department of Health Services

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