



Approximate size of deer tick, the tick that causes Lyme disease.

Easy ways to avoid a tick bite

Many infectious diseases are transmitted by ticks. Lyme disease is the best known, but others that may not sound so familiar include Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, tularemia, and tick paralysis. Not all ticks carry disease, and not all that can make you or your child sick, will.

Here are some steps you can take when you're outdoors, especially in wooded areas and grasslands. They will reduce the chances of you or your child being bitten by a tick.

Simple avoidance

- * Ticks usually climb from the ground or vegetation, so it helps to avoid tall grass or thick ground cover as well as dense woods.
- * In the woods or wilderness, try to stay on cleared trails, away from brush and vegetation.

What to wear

Ticks are most likely to bite in areas of warmth—at the belt line or neckline, at the tops of shoes or boots, on the scalp, or in the groin or armpits. These simple steps for both you and your child may help you deny ticks the opportunity to attach:

- * Wear long pants tucked into long socks or boots. Or use masking tape or rubber bands to tighten the fit of the pants legs.
- * Wear a long-sleeved shirt that is snug about the wrists and tucked into the waistband.
- * Don't wear sandals or other open-toed shoes.
- * Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to find any ticks.

Use repellents

- * Spray a repellent containing permethrin on clothes (not skin), if you can buy the product in your state.
- * Be careful when using repellents that contain DEET (diethyltoluamide) in children. Use them in small amounts, and follow the label directions carefully. Too much DEET can cause side effects—some of them serious.
- * Ask your veterinarian about tick repellents for your pet.

Self-inspection

- * After you've been outdoors, especially in wooded areas or grasslands, check your child's body carefully for ticks twice a day. Don't forget to inspect the neck and scalp. You can use a fine-tooth comb to find ticks in hair.
- * Be aware that some ticks, including the one that transmits Lyme disease, are tiny—about the size of a poppy seed—before they are swollen with blood.
- * Be sure to check pets for ticks, too.