



Tick Removal Information



Inspection

Be aware that different kinds of ticks prefer different places on the body. Remove promptly.

1. The entire body needs to be checked, especially crevices such as between the toes, behind the knees, where clothes are tight, and the genital area. Run hands through hair.
2. Use a mirror or have someone else look at parts of the body not easily seen.
3. Remember that ticks may be in the larval, nymph, or adult stage, so they can be from the size of a poppy seed to the size of a small watermelon seed (unfed). Look accordingly.

Removal

Diseases can be transmitted through tiny breaks in the skin when handling ticks so it is very important not to touch them without protection.

1. Teach children not to remove ticks themselves unless they are old enough to use correct techniques.
2. Take a shower after exposure and use a washcloth all over the body to help dislodge ticks that have not yet embedded themselves.
3. DO NOTS:
 - Do not use any substance such as Vaseline, hot matches, etc, on the tick as this may irritate the tick causing it to regurgitate infected materials into the wound.
 - Do not use bare fingers or squeeze the body of the tick.
 - Do not twist or rock the tick from side to side while removing.

STEPS FOR REMOVAL

- Grasp the tick with pointed tweezers* as close to the skin as possible and pull away from the direction that the mouthparts are inserted with even steady pressure.
 - If mouthparts remain embedded, if you wish, they may be removed as you would a splinter. Call your health care provider if any signs of infection develop or you are concerned.
- Keep the tick!! Either put the tick in alcohol or tape it on an index card with the date and location of the bite. If the bitten person gets a rash or signs of illness later, it helps sort out which diseases may be involved to know the kind of tick. Some ticks may need an entomologist for identification.
- Clean the wound and the tweezers with alcohol. Wash hands thoroughly.

AFTER REMOVAL

Not all ticks carry infectious diseases. Some may carry more than one. Watch for rashes around the bite and on other parts of the body. The “bull’s-eye” rash is a misnomer, many tick-related rashes are solid red. It is normal for the Lone Star tick bite to leave a small red itching bump. Flu-like symptoms (up to 30 days following the bite) or any rash greater than a small local reaction require a visit to your doctor. Take the tick with you.

*Various other tools are available in some stores and over the Internet for tick removal.

Note: Information is for educational purposes only. For medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your health care provider.

For more information see www.tic-nc.org.

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