

# Avoiding Tick Bites

*How to avoid tick bites and what to do if one bites you anyway...*

Knowing how to avoid ticks can prevent diseases such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, anaplasmosis, erlichiosis, and Rickettsia parkeri infection. These diseases can cause mild symptoms such as rashes, chills, fever, and headaches, diarrhea, light sensitivity, malaise, and muscle aches. Sometimes symptoms may be treated at home, however, it is best to seek medical advice for all tick related symptoms because tick bites can lead to death.

Learning to avoid ticks means in part learning about environments ticks frequent and avoiding those areas; and yet, there may be times when avoiding tick infested environments is impossible or simply not feasible. For example, people work in these environments. In furtherance, some people live in these environments.

Travelers may think of grassy and brushy areas as tick harborers and thus, be mindful to avoid grassy bushy grounds. This may be well and dandy since ticks such as Lyme disease causing Borrelia burgdorferi does frequent grassy and brushy environments. Grassy bushy areas are not the only environments ticks frequent; however, thus travelers should be mindful of ticks living in woody areas as well.

In cases where avoiding tick environments is impossible or near impossible the next best thing to do is to avoid tick attacks. This means learning to keep ticks off people and their pets. Keeping ticks off people means dressing in protective manners when preparing for trips through tick-infested areas.

When planning to travel through tick-infested environments avoid ticks by wearing light colored clothing that covers the

entire body and hats that block ticks from hair. Tick avoidance outfits should consist of light colored long sleeve shirts and long pants plus socks and shoes.

Light colored clothing allows wearers to spot hitching ticks easier should ticks jump on their clothes. Long pants and long sleeve shirts, sweaters, or jackets help keep ticks from jumping on skin. For additional security, tuck shirts into pants and tuck pant cuffs into socks. Shoes should surround the entire foot – no sandals or sling backs. Get the most from hat wearing by pony tailing long hair and tucking it under hats.

In addition to avoiding ticks using protective clothing when visiting tick environments it is also a good idea to wear tick repellent. Tick repellents with DEET or permethrin work best. You can spray DEET onto skin or clothing. Permethrin is for clothing only. Users should read and follow instructions on the label.

Never take it for granted that precautions taken prior to visiting tick ridden environments prevented ticks from getting on you or others. Always check hair, clothing, and shoes to make certain no ticks are about before entering vehicles or taking clothes off. Wash clothes immediately in case tiny ticks manage to make it home with you.

Pet owners living in or traveling through tick-ridden environments should check their furry friends' for tick attachment. Check all the way to the skin and all over furred animal bodies. Ticks often hang out on dog ears because it is easy to attach to ear flesh, however, ticks may attach themselves to other animal parts as well. Help avoid ticks on pets by using pet tick collars.

Places to perform bodily tick checks:

Under arms, between legs, about the waist, around and in the ears, knees – back and front, belly button – examine

thoroughly.

It may take as much as 24 hours for bacteria carrying ticks to infect their victims. Therefore, remove ticks right away in hopes to avoid contracting tick related diseases. Use tweezers to remove ticks from humans or pets taking care to remove the entire tick and not leaving any pieces behind.

Wash hands after removing ticks and apply antiseptic to affected tick bitten areas immediately. If symptoms mentioned above or any other symptoms suspected to be tick bite related occur, consult a physician. Sometimes, symptoms from tick bites do not appear for weeks or even months. It is important to seek medical care even if weeks or months pass before you notice signs that you may have been bitten by a tick or ticks.

Avoid camping near deer because deer attract Lyme ticks. Avoid brushing up against tall grass and shrubs in areas you know or suspect may be littered with ticks. Avoid moist areas and walk in trail centers and avoid stirring leaves and other dead vegetation. If attached ticks were successfully removed but victims develop flu like symptoms weeks down the road, contact your health care providers without delay!

Avoiding ticks near the home when living near ticks may not be completely possible, however, residents can drastically reduce tick populations using insecticides intended to control ticks. Homeowners can also landscape their homes in ways that are less likely to attract ticks. They can also keep play areas and outdoor work areas away from greenery that may harbor ticks. Another reason to keep greenery away from the home is that deer seeking food may come along to eat the greenery and leave hitchhiking ticks as payment.

Ticks go through a series of stages from larvae to adult and need warm blood to advance themselves from one stage to the next stage. This is why ticks also feed on other mammals and on birds.

Hopefully, information in this writing will help readers traveling through tick infested environments avoid getting tick bitten, however, should unfortunate bites occur, at least the informed will know what to do.