



Personal Protection Against Ticks

Ticks like to rest on low-lying brush and 'catch a ride' on a passing animal or person. The areas that hold a high risk of tick infestation are wooded areas, low-growing grassland, and the seashore. You should exercise caution where you go.

To reduce your chance of getting a tick-bite:

1. Avoid tick infested areas, when possible
Avoid short-cuts through heavily wooded, tick-infested areas.
2. Use caution when you are entering tick-infested areas.
Stay in the center of paths, avoid sitting on the ground, and conduct frequent tick-checks.
3. Dress properly.

Wear light-colored clothing.

This allows you to more easily see ticks on your clothing and gives you the opportunity to remove them before they can attach to your skin and feed.

Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants.

This reduces the skin area exposed to ticks. Also, tuck your shirt into your pants and pants into your socks. This keeps the ticks on the outside of your clothing and thwarts their efforts to crawl onto your skin. However, during warm or hot weather, this is not practical. So, if this advice is ignored, we suggest that you increase your vigilance in conducting tick-checks.

Use EPA-approved tick repellents.

During the summer months, it can be inconvenient to wear pants and long-sleeved clothing, so using repellents can help protect yourself from ticks. Wash off the repellents when you return inside, and children should always have an adult apply the repellent for them.

Conduct frequent tick-checks.

This includes a visual inspection of the clothing and exposed skin, followed by a naked, full-body examination in a private location. Be sure to check the scalp, behind and in the ears, and behind any joints.

Remember to check your pets too!

This is not only for your pets' safety but for your family's as well. Pets can bring ticks in from outside and put you and your family at risk for infection.

Backyard Tick Control

A typical lawn is not considered good tick habitat, especially for deer ticks. Deer ticks are very susceptible to desiccation, and the typical well-mowed lawn, receiving lots of direct sunlight, is not conducive to maintaining high tick populations. The American dog tick, however, is more hardy and able to survive well in lawns and fields. None the less, most control efforts should be focused on the edge of your lawn, especially if it's adjacent to wooded areas or other habitats harboring tick populations. There are several options for tick control in your yard. First, you can try altering your yard's landscape such that it is not tick "friendly". In other words, you can reduce mouse and other small mammal nesting sites - such as brush and wood piles. Also, you can fence the yard so that deer and other tick hosts can not walk through it. Deer certainly carry ticks on them, and it is possible that engorged female ticks could get deposited in your yard via grazing deer. You can cut back overhanging limbs or put "barriers" between your yard and the wooded areas. For example, a 2 - 5 foot wide stripe of wood chips or decorative stones can help to prevent ticks from entering your lawn. Also, this can serve as a physical reminder to yourself that you're entering tick habitat.

If you can't or it's impractical to implement some of the habitat manipulations suggested above, you may have to resort to applying insecticides. However, you don't necessarily have to treat the entire yard, as suggested above. First of all, a perimeter treatment around the house on tall grasses & foundation plantings is effective. Control efforts also need to be focused at your yard's edge, especially where your yard borders on woods. The exception would be if you have an existing infestation of dog ticks, for example. Generally, spraying around the outside edges of your lawn, about 5 - 10 feet in from the wood's edge. Again, very few ticks are found in the middle of a well-maintained lawn that receives lots of direct sunlight because this type of area would most likely desiccate the ticks. Consequently, if you have these types of open areas, it not effective to spray them unless you know that the ticks are existing throughout your lawn. However, consideration should be given to areas of the yard that get lots of shade, have bushes or other landscaping features, and have areas suitable for small mammal harborage.

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