

Tick Encounters

WHAT IS IT?

Ticks are tiny bugs most likely found in shady, damp, brushy, wooded or grassy areas, including your own back yard.

There are a variety of ticks and not all carry disease or the same diseases.

- The nymph deer tick (aka black-legged tick) are the size of a poppy seed and are most active May through July. They latch on at shoe level and crawl to dark, warm places on the body such as behind the knees, pelvic area, buttock, under breasts, behind ears, and underarms, for example.
- The adult deer ticks are active in late summer and fall and latch on at knee height before crawling up.
- Dog ticks and deer ticks are highly endemic to New England, but the deer tick is most problematic because it can transmit Lyme and other diseases that can make a person quite ill.
- Dog (or wood) ticks can also transmit disease but this is less likely to occur in our region. These latch on similar to adult deer ticks.
- A tick needs to be attached for approximately 24 hours to transmit Lyme disease.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE:

- Fever or chills
- Headache, muscle or joint aches
- Fatigue
- Rash—often with a bullseye appearance
- Severe headache and neck stiffness
- Heart palpitations
- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Facial droop, nerve pain
- Mental status change



SELF CARE - Prevention, prevention, prevention!

- When out in high tick areas, cover yourself, tuck pants into socks and use permethrin treated clothing, especially your shoes. Be sure to spray the inside 10 inches of your pant or shorts legs—ticks will die from contact to this substance before they can bite you.
- Make sure your outdoor pets are treated with repellent. You can also spray a dog's collar and leash (not directly on the animal) with permethrin to reduce exposure. *Check them for ticks before entering the home.*
- Bug repellents such as Deet or picaridin sprays work well, but only for a short period of time—approximately 6-8 hrs.
- Conduct daily body tick checks—remember if you find a tick attached before 24 hours from time of exposure, risk of disease transmission is low.
- If you find a tick attached to yourself or your pet, remove it with pointy tweezers by grasping as close to the skin as possible and pulling straight up in a slow and steady motion. Avoid squeezing the body of the tick during removal as this could express germs into the skin.
- Save the tick or take a picture for identification. If you remove a tick from your body and are unsure what type of tick it is, take a picture with your phone and send it to TickSpotters.org for a personalized risk assessment and education.

Educate yourself. For all you ever wanted to know about ticks, visit <https://web.uri.edu/tickencounter/>

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions.

Contact Health Services if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.



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