



Ticks and Lyme Disease



Types of ticks from left to right. Larva, nymph, adult male, adult female, and engorged adult female Deer Tick and adult male and female Dog Ticks.

What is a tick?

Ticks are in the phylum of animals called Arthropoda (jointed appendage). This phylum of animals is the largest in the animal kingdom. There are over 850 different species of ticks, and they parasitize every class of terrestrial vertebrate animal, including amphibians. Ticks are small rounded arachnids that cling to one spot and do not move. They feed by inserting their

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme Disease is an illness caused by bacteria called spirochetes. A tick infected with the bacterium can transmit spirochetes to people, dogs, horses and other animals. The disease is rarely life threatening but has the potential to cause problems in the joints causing arthritis, the central nervous system and heart.

Symptoms of Lyme Disease may vary from person to person. Usually a small, red skin rash develops at the site of the tick bite three to 32 days later. Gradually, this area enlarges and

there is often a partial clearing at the center, which looks like a doughnut. The rash may be accompanied by flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, stiff neck, sore and aching muscles and joints, fatigue, sore throat and swollen glands. The symptoms and rash may disappear in several weeks. However, the rash and more serious problems may occur later. Treatment with antibiotics clears up the rash and usually prevents complications. If not treated, Lyme Disease can cause long-term health problems with the joints, nervous

What can I do to avoid being bitten?

There is no one way to prevent getting bitten by a tick. There are several ways to lessen the chances of a person getting bitten. Avoid areas where ticks live. Do not walk barelegged in the woods, brush or tall grass. Wear light colored clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, high socks (with pants tucked into the socks) and closed shoes or boots. Light colors show ticks better. Apply a commercial tick or insect repellent containing the chemical DEET on clothing, shoes

and socks. Do not spray repellent on the face, cuts, sunburns or rashes. Do not put it on the hands. Read the label carefully for any precautions. Do not apply high concentration products to the skin, particularly that of children. These products can irritate the skin.

Check your head and body regularly and thoroughly throughout the day and when you get home. Have someone else check your back or use a mirror.

When am I most likely to be bitten?

Ticks feed during any month where the temperature is above 35 degrees but most commonly feed from April through October. June and July are high-risk months for exposure to ticks.

What should I do if I am bitten?

If you find a tick, remove it promptly by grasping with fine-tipped tweezers, as close to the skin as possible, and pulling steadily and firmly. You may want to save the tick in a small jar for identification later. Check to see if the mouthparts broke off in the wound. If they did, seek medical attention to get them removed.

Wash wound with soap and water. Apply antiseptic or antibiotic ointment to prevent infection. Check the bite for

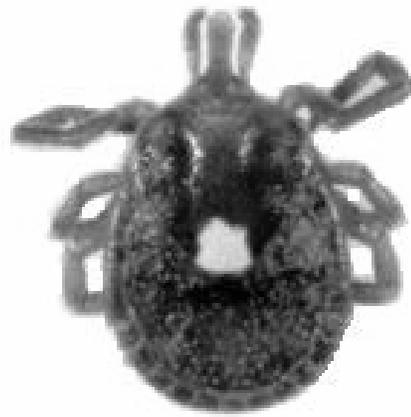
at least two weeks to see if a rash forms. Even if a rash does not form, but you experience chills, headaches, muscle or joint aches or flu-like symptoms, seek medical attention immediately. A blood test can help determine if you have been exposed to Lyme disease.

For more information about ticks and Lyme disease, please call the visitor center at 703-221-7181 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

What does a tick look like?



Close-up view of tick mouthparts



Lone-Star Tick



American Dog Tick



Brown-Legged or Deer Tick