

EARLY SYMPTOMS

Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms after a tick bite.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER:

Symptoms may include chills, headache, muscle pain, high fever, nausea, stomach pain, loss of appetite, diarrhea and rash.

Symptoms appear three to 14 days after the bite of an infected tick.

TICK PARALYSIS:

The first signs of tick paralysis are weakness in the legs and an inability to stand or walk.

Symptoms may get better within a few hours or they may worsen.

LYME DISEASE:

Symptoms may include a skin rash followed by fever, headache, stiff neck, muscle ache, loss of appetite, sore throat, stomach pain, and/or joint pain.

Symptoms can appear three to 32 days after the bite of an infected tick.

TULAREMIA:

Symptoms may include chills, headache, muscle pain, high fever, nausea, stomach pain, loss of appetite, diarrhea and rash.

Symptoms can appear one to 14 days after the bite of an infected tick.

PREVENTION

- Apply insect repellents containing DEET or permethrin to clothing and exposed parts of the body. Follow manufacturer's directions.
- Wear clothing that keeps ticks away from skin, such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Avoid sitting on grass and logs.
- Thoroughly inspect the entire body. Ticks seldom attach right away and rarely spread disease until they have fed for several hours.
- Inspect children at least twice daily. In heavily infested areas, inspect them every three to four hours.
- Keep weeds and grass cut in yards and recreational areas.
- Clear brush along paths.
- Promptly remove ticks from pets to prevent growth of the tick population near homes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local public health unit or call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.



Last updated 7/2007

TICK BITES

CAN CAUSE SERIOUS ILLNESS



Photo courtesy: Mat Pound, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org



FACTS AND TIDBITS

- As ticks suck blood they can spread serious and sometimes deadly illnesses such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF), tick paralysis, Lyme disease and tularemia.
- Tick paralysis, Lyme disease and RMSF affect children more frequently than adults.
- Most tick bites occur in late spring and summer.
- Most tick bites do not cause illness.
- It is important to remove a tick as soon as possible so it doesn't cause infection.
- Follow the same precautions when removing ticks from both animals and people.
- Children should not remove ticks themselves.
- Ticks secrete a cement-like substance that looks like skin surrounding its mouth parts. If the cement collar or mouth parts remain in the skin, remove them.



Classic Lyme disease bull's-eye rash.

Photo courtesy of Jim Occi/LDA.

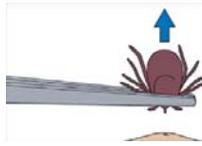
TICK REMOVAL

1) **CLEAN THE SITE** with alcohol or another disinfectant before removing the tick.

2) **GRASP THE TICK AS CLOSELY TO THE SKIN AS POSSIBLE** using a tweezers. If fingers are used, cover them with a tissue, a paper towel or rubber gloves.



3) **PULL UP WITH STEADY, EVEN PRESSURE.** Do not twist or jerk, as this may cause the mouth parts to break off, leaving them and the cement collar in the skin.



4) **DO NOT SQUEEZE, CRUSH OR PUNCTURE THE BODY OF THE TICK,** as its fluids may contain germs that can cause disease.

5) After removing the tick, thoroughly **DISINFECT THE BITE SITE** and **WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER.**

6) **APPLY AN ADHESIVE BANDAGE** to prevent infection.

7) **GET RID OF TICKS SAFELY** by placing them in a container of alcohol or flushing them down the toilet.

FOLKLORE

Several traditional or "folk" methods are said to cause a tick to "back out" of the skin. Studies indicate that **NONE** of these methods are effective in removing ticks!

- **Petroleum jelly** will not work because the breathing rate in ticks is so slow that blocking the air supply even for a few hours does not cause the tick to let go.
- **Nail polish** actually may stop the tick from letting go because it is unable to move once the polish has hardened.
- **Rubbing alcohol** helps to disinfect the bite site but will not make the tick let go.
- Do not use a **hot match** because (1) it may burn the skin; (2) it can cause the tick to burst and spread infection; and (3) it may cause the tick to release infected fluids into the wound.



Photo courtesy of Jim Occi/LDA.

The smallest ticks shown above are called nymphs. These "baby ticks" are very hard to see. They are also able to cause infection. So when checking for ticks, make sure you are looking very carefully for both large and small ticks.