

# Tickborne Illness



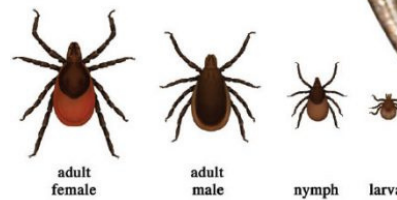
As the climate becomes warmer, ticks' ranges have spread northward, and the tick season has lengthened in many regions. Learn what you can do to stay safe.

## Diseases spread by tick bites

- **Lyme Disease** - About 30,000 people are infected each year in the United States. Symptoms can include a bulls-eye rash, fever, chills, headache, and fatigue -- and later, joint pain and neurological problems. People treated early usually recover rapidly and completely. However, up to 20 percent of Lyme disease causes long-lasting symptoms.
- **Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF)** - symptoms include a fever, headache, upset stomach, and a rash.
- **Babesiosis** - a parasitic infection that infects red blood cells. Symptoms include flu-like symptoms and anemia.
- **Other diseases** include Anaplasmosis, Colorado tick fever, STARI, and more.

### Ticks That Commonly Bite Humans

Blacklegged Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)



Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)



**NOTE:** Relative sizes of several ticks at different life stages.

Engorged female *Ixodes scapularis* tick. Color may vary.



**Blacklegged ticks are the only ticks known to carry Lyme disease. However, other ticks can carry other diseases.**

(Image from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/tickbornediseases/images/tick-life-stages-medium.jpg>)



# How to stay safe around ticks

## Prevent bites

### Before you go outside...

- **Know where they hide.** Ticks thrive in grass, brush, or wooded areas. They can also live on animals.
- **Use bug spray** with DEET, picaridin, IR3535, OLE, or PMD.
- **Wear proper clothing** including long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks. Consider treating clothes and gear with clothing spray.
- **Watch where you walk.** Stay on trails and avoid tall grass, leaf litter, and wooded areas.
- **Keep a tidy yard.** Mow grass short and clear away leaves and brush.

### When you come back in...

- **Check clothing for ticks.** Wash with hot water OR dry for 10 minutes on high heat.
- **Check gear and pets.**
- **Shower soon after** to wash off unattached ticks.
- **Check your body for ticks**, including armpits, in and around ears, belly button, back of knees, in and around hair, between the legs, and waist.

## Remove ticks

- Don't panic! Ticks caught early are less likely to spread disease.
- Use fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick.
- Clean the bite and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
- Flush the tick down the toilet, or place in a sealed bag or in alcohol. Don't crush a tick with your fingers.
- Don't use petroleum jelly, nail polish, or heat on the tick.

## Check symptoms

- Consider calling your doctor if you live in a place where Lyme disease is common, regardless of symptoms.
- Call your doctor if you get a rash, fever, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, or joint swelling and pain within 30 days after a bite or suspected tick exposure. See your doctor even if symptoms disappear, because the disease is not necessarily gone.
- A bulls-eye rash (a circular rash with a clear center) is a common symptom of Lyme disease and STARI. Other types of rashes may also occur.