

TICKS

How to protect yourself

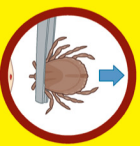
Follow these steps to reduce your risk of contracting Lyme disease.

- ▶ Avoid marshy areas, and don't brush up against high grass, and woody shrubs.
- ▶ Wear long pants and tuck them into your socks to prevent ticks from crawling up your legs. Tick researchers wind duct tape around the sock-pant junction to keep ticks out.
- ▶ Wear light-colored clothing so you can spot ticks more easily.
- ▶ Spread insect repellent on your skin or spray the insecticide permethrin on your clothing.
- ▶ At least once a day, check your body. Think small—deer ticks nymphs, which spread Lyme disease far more often than adult deer ticks, are usually about the size of poppy seeds.
- ▶ If you find a tick and suspect it has been attached for at least 36 hours, ask your doctor about taking a single dose of the antibiotic doxycycline as insurance against an infection.



How to remove a tick

Carry fine-tipped tweezers when hiking in high-risk areas. If you find an embedded tick, grasp it near your skin with the tweezers and pull it out in one steady motion without crushing it. Don't worry if mouthparts remain in your skin; once a tick's body is gone, it can no longer transmit disease. If you crush a tick, wash your skin with soapy water or alcohol.



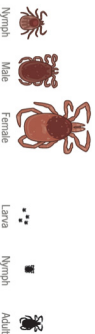
What to do after you've been bitten

Studies show it takes 36 to 48 hours for the Lyme bacteria to move from tick to human, in part because the bacteria must migrate from a deer tick's midgut to its salivary glands before passing to a human host. If you remove a tick within 36 hours, your odds of contracting Lyme disease are slim—less than 4 percent, says Gary Wormser, chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at New York Medical College. If you're close to that time limit, a single 200-milligram dose of doxycycline can cut your risk to almost nil.

Identification at a Glance

Deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis* and *pacificus*)

Transmits agents of Lyme disease and a parasitic disease called babesiosis.



Actual Size

Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)

Transmits agents of ehrlichiosis and a Lyme-like condition known by the acronym STARI. Found in the southeastern United States.



Actual Size

American dog tick

(*Dermacentor variabilis* and *andersoni*)

Transmits agents of Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia (but not Lyme).



Actual Size