

Fight the Bite!

Facts About Bug Bites



About mosquitoes: Mosquitoes lay eggs near ditches, ponds and anything else that will hold water, like old tires, clogged gutters and trash cans. In the summer, large numbers of mosquitoes are common, especially after a lot of rain. Getting bitten by a mosquito can cause diseases like West Nile virus or encephalitis.



About ticks: Ticks live in moist, shaded woods, low-growing brush, dense weeds or piles of leaves. Ticks can even live in your own backyard, in woodpiles and areas of high grass. There are many kinds of ticks, like the dog tick, blacklegged tick and the lone star tick. Getting bitten by a tick can cause diseases like Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Usually bug bites are just a pain. Some bites may sting, itch or leave a red mark on the skin. But sometimes a bug bite can spread germs that cause disease.

Only a small number of insects may be carrying germs that cause disease, so being bitten does not mean a person will become sick. But, older adults, children and people with health conditions are more likely to get sick. Preventing bug bites will help keep you and others healthy.

Take these steps to fight the bite:

Use bug spray. Put insect repellent on exposed skin when you go outside. Repellents that have DEET work the best. Be sure you rub it on according to the directions (do not use on babies under 2 months old). Be careful to not get it in your mouth or eyes and wash your hands after you apply it.



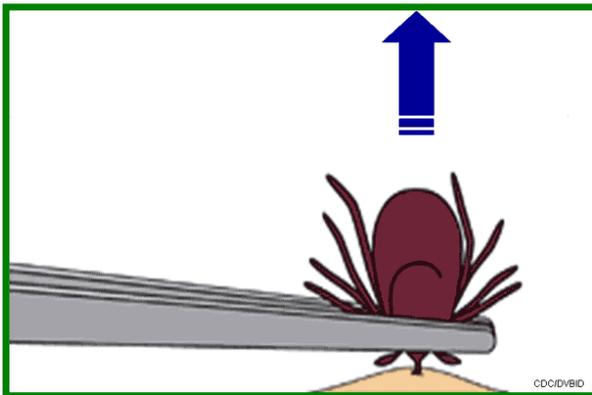
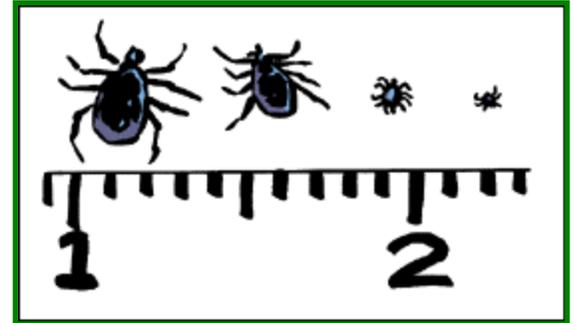
Cover with clothes. Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants when outside. You can even spray your clothes with a bug repellent for more protection. Use mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with babies.

Take care during peak times. The time between dusk and dawn are when most mosquitoes bite the most. Be extra sure to wear bug spray and protective clothing during evening and early morning. Try to avoid being outside at these times.

Drain standing water. Limit the places around your home where mosquitoes can breed. Get rid of items that hold water, like old tires. Empty out other things that have standing water, like swimming pool covers, birdbaths, clogged rain gutters and trash cans.

Do a tick check. After being outside, check your clothes and body to make sure there aren't any ticks on you. Get help checking the places you can't see like your back, the top of your head and in your hair.

If you wear light-colored clothing, you can see ticks more easily and brush them off before they become attached to your skin. If you find one tick, keep looking—there may be others that you didn't see the first time around. Ticks are hard to see—nymphs (ticks that are not quite adults yet) are the size of a pinhead, and adults are smaller than a sesame seed.



Remove a tick from your skin as soon as you notice it. Use fine-tipped tweezers to firmly grasp the tick very close to your skin. With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from your skin. Then wash your skin with soap and warm water. Throw the dead tick away with your household trash.

Try to avoid crushing the tick's body. Do not worry if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it

can no longer transmit the Lyme disease germ. If you crush the tick by accident, clean your skin with soap and warm water or alcohol.

Don't use petroleum jelly (Vaseline), a hot match, nail polish or other products to remove a tick.

For more facts, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

- **About ticks**
www.cdc.gov/Features/StopTicks
- **About Lyme disease**
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/Lyme
- **About mosquito repellent**
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/mosquitorepellent.htm
- **About West Nile virus**
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile
- **Facts for kids**
www.bam.gov
 - **About mosquitoes and West Nile virus**
www.bam.gov/sub_diseases/diseases_westnile.html
 - **About ticks and Lyme disease**
www.bam.gov/sub_yoursafety/yoursafety_ticktactics.html