

## How can I protect my family, my pets, and myself from tick bites?

The best way to prevent these diseases is to prevent

### What should I do if I find a tick?

The tick should be carefully removed. The longer an infected tick remains attached to you, the more likely you are to get sick.

1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick — this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in your skin. If this happens, re-grasp the tick with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the tick, leave it alone and see a doctor.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly wash the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, and wash your hands again with soap and water.

Avoid folklore remedies such as smearing the tick with Vaseline, nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick fall off.

### What are ticks?

Ticks are bugs that feed on animals. When they bite you, they can make you sick. Two kinds of ticks carry diseases — deer ticks and dog ticks.

#### Deer ticks

Both young (nymph) and adult deer ticks are active from late spring through fall. The risk of being bitten by a deer tick is highest in the summer and fall. However, ticks are active in winter if winter temperatures are above freezing. Deer ticks are the size of a poppy seed and dog ticks are the size of a sesame seed, so they can be hard to see.

#### Dog ticks

In general, only the adult dog tick carries a disease. The risk of being bitten by a dog tick is highest in the summer and fall.

## What diseases do ticks spread?

Dog ticks can spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Tularemia.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a bacterial disease that usually causes a high fever with severe headache and tiredness. Symptoms begin anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks after being bitten by an infected tick. A rash that spreads to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet often appears 3 to 5 days after the fever begins. Rocky Mountain spotted fever is rare in Massachusetts and generally occurs in the southeastern part of the state, Cape Cod, and on Martha's Vineyard.

Tularemia is a disease caused by bacteria that can be spread by the bite of an infected dog tick. Symptoms usually begin between 3 to 5 days after an exposure, but may take as

## What kind of repellent should I use?

Different repellents work against different kinds of bugs. It is important to look at the "active ingredient" on the product label. Repellents with DEET or permethrin are recommended for protection against ticks. Some repellents, such as picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, prevent mosquito bites, but do NOT work against ticks.

Repellents with DEET can be used directly on exposed skin or on clothing. If you use it on your clothes, be aware that DEET can damage some synthetic fabrics such as acetate, rayon or spandex.

There are over 200 products containing DEET registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ranging in concentration from 5% to 100% DEET. In general, the higher the percentage of DEET, the longer it lasts. Read the product label so you know how often it should be reapplied. DEET should not be used on infants

## How can I reduce the around my home?

You don't have to be walking  
bitten by a tick. You can be  
You can reduce the number  
home by following these tips

- Keep grass cut short.
- Remove leaves and brush from
- Prune low-lying bushes to let  
moisture. Ticks need moisture
- Keep woodpiles and birdfeed  
from your home to discourage  
which can carry ticks.