

Ticks and Tick-Borne Disease

Preventing Tick Bites

Dress Appropriately

When outdoors in areas where there may be ticks, wear long pants and sleeves. Don't wear shorts, sleeveless shirts, or sandals. Tuck pants into socks or boots, and shirts into pants. Light-colored clothing makes it easier to see ticks before they attach to the skin.

Use Insect Repellent

The insect repellents that work for mosquitoes are effective against ticks. Look for formulas containing DEET. These should be applied according to the label instructions only. Insect-repellent clothing is also available.

Avoid Tick Habitat

Ticks are often found in brush, tall grass, or leaf litter. When hiking, walk in the center of the trail. Avoid grassy or brushy areas, and don't hike off the trail.

Check Yourself and Your Gear

After outdoor activities in areas where there may be ticks, check yourself, your children, your pets, and your gear carefully for ticks. Remember to check areas that cannot be easily seen, such as inside and around ears, on the scalp, and under arms. Showering soon after being outdoors can help rinse away unattached ticks, and will allow you to check all areas of your body.

Timing is Important!

Even if you are bitten by an infected tick, removing it promptly can reduce your chances of becoming infected with a tick-borne disease. Always check yourself for ticks after outdoor activity, and if you find one remove it right away. In most cases, a tick removed within 48 hours of attachment will not transmit disease.

Safely Removing a Tick

1. Use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible.
2. Pull away from the skin using steady, even pressure. Don't jerk or twist the tick. Never try to burn or smother a tick.
3. After removal, wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water, or use a disinfectant solution.
4. Dispose of the tick by placing it in a sealed container, immersing it in alcohol, or flushing it down the toilet. Don't crush it with your fingers.
5. Consult a health professional if you are unable to completely remove a tick, or if you develop a rash or fever after being bitten by a tick.



Keep Ticks Out of your Yard

- **Keep grass mowed**
- **Clear tall grass and brush, and remove leaf litter**
- **Move children's play equipment away from trees and bushes and into the sun**
- **Avoid planting dense ground cover**
- **Discourage deer and other wildlife from visiting your property**

Tick-Borne Diseases in California

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in California, with nearly 100 confirmed human cases in 2013. It is caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected western blacklegged tick or deer tick.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease occur 3-30 days after infection, and include a red, spreading rash at the site of the tick bite, along with fatigue, fever, chills, headache, joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes. If untreated, infection with Lyme disease may spread to other parts of the body. Later symptoms, appearing several days to several weeks after infection, include meningitis, facial paralysis, arthritis of the large joints, and heart palpitations.

Some people who have been treated for Lyme disease will continue to experience chronic symptoms, including joint pain, cognitive impairment, and fatigue.

Other tick-borne diseases are found in California, but are less common:

- Anaplasmosis
- Babesiosis
- *Borrelia miyamotoi*
- Ehrlichiosis
- Rickettsia
- Rocky mountain spotted fever
- Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Tick paralysis
- Tularemia

The same precautions recommended to reduce the risk of Lyme disease will also reduce the risk of other tick-borne diseases. If you experience symptoms after being bitten by a tick or after spending time outdoors in areas where ticks are common, you should be evaluated by a medical professional.

An itchy, painful redness around the site of a tick bite that occurs within less than 24 hours is likely to be an allergic reaction rather than an indication of tick-borne disease.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org



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