

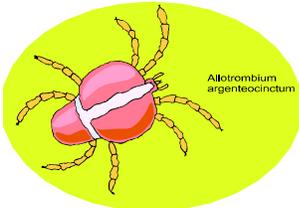


Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

This Is Tick Season



Many of us know the feeling when you suddenly discover that the little mole or freckle you've been scratching starts to move. It's a tick! Those creepy little creatures that appear during the warm weather months on the East Coast can cause serious illness when they bite.

If they're infected, several different kinds of ticks can be responsible for transmitting the bacteria that cause a number of diseases, so it's best to take precautions to avoid tick bites in the first place.

A bite by an infected tick can prove costly to a person's health. Lyme disease, which usually causes a telltale rash shaped like a bull's-eye around the bite, also can cause symptoms such as fever, chills and headache. If untreated in the early stages, Lyme disease can lead to arthritis or other long-term health or mental complications. Lyme disease is not known to be fatal, but Rocky Mountain spotted fever can prove deadly if untreated. Antibiotics are always effective methods of treatment if begun early enough, and for this reason health officials recommend seeing a doctor as soon as tick-related illness is suspected.

Another way to avoid getting sick is a "tick check" immediately after being outdoors. The length of time a tick is attached is a factor in avoiding disease. An infected deer tick has to be attached for at least 36 hours before it can transmit Lyme disease, but the infected dog tick only needs to be attached for 4-6 hours to cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

"If you're planning an outdoor vacation in the Northeast as well as engaging in outdoor activity Wearing long pants, tucking the legs inside your socks and avoiding walking unprotected in overgrown grassy areas or dense woods are some of the ways to avoid tick bites.

Other suggestions on how to best avoid becoming a tick's next snack include:

- wearing light colored clothing so ticks can be easily spotted and removed,
- wearing long-sleeved shirts buttoned at the wrists,
- checking pets for ticks and
- using insect repellent.

For people with frequent or prolonged exposure in areas where infected ticks are prevalent, a new vaccine on the market may offer an option to avoid one of the tickborne diseases. However, in just-released guidelines, the CDC recommends vaccine only for those at greatest risk of Lyme disease infection, such as some outdoor workers and those who live or recreate in higher risk areas. Currently, the cost is about \$250 for three doses of vaccine given over a year's time, and insurance coverage varies. The vaccine, which is less than 100 percent effective, is not recommended by the CDC for children under 15, adults over 70 or pregnant women.

Finally, if you are bitten by a tick, how you remove it can increase or decrease chances of infection.

The proper way to remove a tick is by grasping it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently but firmly pulling it straight out. If tweezers aren't available, don't touch the tick with bare fingers. Use a paper towel, gloves or a tissue. The disease-causing organism can enter the bloodstream through any break in the skin.

After removing the tick, wash your hands with soap and warm water and apply an antiseptic, such as alcohol or iodine, to the bite. Nail polish, petroleum jelly, alcohol or a hot match are not safe removal methods.

To identify the tick, you can take it to a county extension agent