



How to Treat Tick Bites

Three Methods: [Removing the Tick](#) [Diagnosing Tick-Borne Diseases](#) [Preventing Tick Bites](#)

While most ticks are harmless and only need to be removed, you need to know the symptoms of tick-borne illnesses to prevent potentially life-threatening conditions like Lyme Disease. Ticks are usually found on pets, in tall grass, and in the forest, and they bite humans to drink their blood for food. As gross as that sounds, treating a tick bite is a simple process that rarely requires a trip to the doctor.

Method
1

Removing the Tick

- 1 Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible with a pair of tweezers.** Get the tips as close to the bottom of the tick as possible so it does not break when you pull it out.^[1]
- 2 Pull upward with firm, even force.** Use even pressure to pull the tick gently out of the skin. Don't twist, jerk, or yank on the tick or you could break the mouth off inside your skin. Think of smoothly pulling back and arrow on a bow.
 - Do not resort to force if the tick doesn't come out easily. Try your best to remove the tick as gently as possible.^[2]
- 3 Pull out any remaining parts of the tick with tweezers.** If the tick's mouth breaks off in your skin, try to gently remove it with the tweezers. However, if you cannot easily get them out then you should leave the bite alone while your skin heals.^[3]
- 4 Do not cover the tick in petroleum jelly or nail polish, or "coax" it out with heat.** Simply remove it with tweezers.^[4]
- 5 Wash the bite thoroughly with soap and water.** This will prevent infection and keep the wound clean and healthy. Cover the bite with a bandage and let it heal naturally, usually after 2-3 days.^[5]
 - If you have it, apply a topical antibacterial cream like Neosporin to clean the bite out.
- 6 Save the tick's body for later identification.** If you do get sick from the bite, a doctor will likely want to test the tick's body for diseases. Put the body in a dry jar or ziplock bag and throw it in the freezer for identification.^[6]
- 7 Seek medical attention if the bite wound gets infected.** Signs include: tenderness, puss, redness, swelling, and red streaks leading from the bite.

Method
2

Diagnosing Tick-Borne Diseases

- 1 See a doctor immediately if you have a rash, joint pain, headache, or fever.** These are all signs of common tick-borne illnesses. Because these diseases can spread quickly it is best to see a doctor immediately if symptoms arise.
 - If you've save it, bring the body of the tick with you for identification.
- 2 Know the symptoms of Lyme Disease.** Lyme disease is the most common disease transmitted from ticks to humans. Lyme disease can lead to serious muscle, joint and brain impairment if not treated. Symptoms typically

begin within 3-30 days of the bite, and include:

- Red “bulls-eye” rash around the location of the bite.
- Fever, chills.
- Joint pain.
- Swollen lymph nodes.^[7]

3 Know the symptoms of Southern Tick Associated Rash Illness (STARI). STARI occurs only in the east coast of America, from the southeastern edge of Nebraska all the way to Maine and Florida.^[8] It is transmitted by the lone star tick. Symptoms include:

- Red rash (2-4 centimeters wide) developing within a week of the tick bite.
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pains.

4 Know the symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Transmitted by multiple species of tick, this bacterial disease can be fatal if untreated. If you notice any of the following symptoms, get treatment immediately – treatment is most effective if started within 5 days of the infection.^[9]

- Sudden fever and headache.
- Rash (though many patients never get a rash)
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Abdominal pain.
- Red eyes.
- Muscle or joint pain.^[10]

5 Know the symptoms of Ehrlichiosis. This disease has spread across the United States and South America through multiple species of ticks. When caught early, treatment is usually a simple course of antibiotics. However, left unchecked it can cause serious medical issues. Symptoms include:

- Fever and chills.
- Headache.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.
- Confusion or lack of mental clarity.
- Red eyes.
- Rash (60% of children, under 30% of adults).^[11]

6 Know the symptoms of Tularemia. This disease kills large numbers of rodents and rabbits each year, but is usually treated quickly with antibiotics for humans. Symptoms include:

- Red, blister-like ulcer at the bite site.
- Irritated and inflamed eyes.
- Sore throat, tonsillitis
- Coughing, chest pain, and difficulty breathing (severe cases).

Method
3

Preventing Tick Bites

1 Know common tick-infested areas. Ticks like tall grasses, wooded areas, and shrubs. Walk in the center of hiking trails to avoid brushing up against tick infested areas.

2 Wear long clothing while hiking. Pants and long sleeves can protect your from ever having to deal with tick bites. Tuck your pants into your socks or boots to prevent them from crawling up under your clothes.

3 Use insect repellent with 20-30% DEET on exposed skin. This is the most effect barrier against tick bites. Avoiding the nose, eyes, and mouth, spray your skin with DEET every 2-3 hours to avoid bites.

- If you can't use DEET, some naturalists swear by 2-3 drops of strong smelling Rose Geranium oil as a natural repellent.^[12]

4 Coat clothes, tents and equipment in 5% permethrin. This chemical is too toxic to put directly on the skin, but it creates a barrier against ticks that lasts through up to 5-6 washings. Clothes that are advertised as "tick-repellent" are coated in permethrin.^[13]

5 Never apply permethrin directly to your skin.

6 Bath or shower shortly after returning indoors. Many ticks will be on your body for several hours before biting. Wash off with soap and water to remove them and easily see if any have already bitten you.

7 Use a mirror or a friend to check your entire body for ticks. Ticks can get into clothing and bite you anywhere, so be sure to check under the arms, behind the ears and knees, and in any hair.^[14]

- Perform this check as soon after leaving the woods as possible.

8 Tumble dry your clothes on high-heat to kill ticks. Any ticks trapped in your clothing will die in the drier. Using high heat, dry your clothes for at least an hour to get rid of any remaining ticks.^[15]

Community Q&A

What can be put on the tick for it to release?



You shouldn't put any kind of substance on a tick, because in the worst case, you will sedate/kill it, leading to it exhaling all kinds of contaminants into your bloodstream. Just pull it out gently.

Flag as duplicate

Not Helpful 0

Helpful 3

Can you answer these readers' questions?

Refresh

On **How to Sell an Item Faster on Craigslist**, a reader asks:

How do I add images to my ad?

Your answer...

Reply

On **How to Set up Bluetooth**, a reader asks:

How do you set up WiFi in Acer E-machines?

Your answer...

Reply

On **How to Start a DUI School**, a reader asks:

If a Master Chief Sargent has retired from the Air Force but was an instructor while enlisted will he or she qualify to teach the DUI courses?

Your answer...

Reply

Tips

- Do not use ointments bacteria flourish, use Betadine.

Warnings

- Never squeeze the tick's body or try to pop it.

Sources and Citations

1. http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html
2. <http://www.webmd.com/first-aid/tc/how-to-remove-a-tick-overview>
3. http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

Show more... (12)