All aboutTicks | Submitted by Susan Dollard

I found a tick on me already. What do I need to know about them? - Mary, Bridgeville, NY

We have already had several reports of ticks this year. While out gardening you need to be aware and follow some simple precautions. Ticks are arthropods that are sometimes mistakenly called insects. Depending on the stage they are in they could have 6 or 8 legs. They have a head and body, but no wings. Ticks possess tremendous potential for transmitting disease-causing organisms to humans and other animals. These organisms include protozoa, viruses, and bacteria. I can attest to this. I was bitten last summer and after 24 hours I was extremely sick with body aches and running a very high fever. I was treated with 3 antibiotics for well over a month. So far I have not had any further problems. My point is tick bites are not to be taken lightly. Additionally, tick bites can cause skin irritations or even allergic reactions in sensitive people who are repeatedly bitten. See your doctor if you think you have been bitten.

Ticks undergo four developmental stages: egg, larva, nymph, and adult. We have seen all these stages at CCE. All developmental stages of ticks are obligate blood feeders. New York State has several species of ticks. According to Cornell University, those of greatest public health importance are the American dog tick, the brown dog tick, the lone star tick, the groundhog tick, and the blacklegged tick (Deer Tick). We have most often seen dog ticks and deer ticks.

Dog Ticks

American dog tick females are about 1/4 inch long and are chestnut brown with a silvery-gray or creamy-white shield. Male ticks are slightly smaller, and are chestnut brown with similar light-colored vertical markings on the dorsal surface. Adults, sometimes called wood ticks, occasionally attack humans but are more common on dogs and other medium-sized animals. Brown dog ticks are reddish-brown with a dark brown shield. All stages feed almost exclusively on dogs and can become established in kennels. Although brown dog ticks can be found crawling on humans they rarely attach and feed on humans. This tick is considered a nuisance species and is not known to transmit disease-causing organisms to humans in the United States.

Deer Ticks Are More of a Threat

The blacklegged tick also known as "deer ticks", adult females are dark brown in appearance and are less than 1/8 inch (3.12mm) long. Larvae and nymphs feed on small mammals and birds. The blacklegged tick is a vector of two well described bacterial diseases and one protozoan disease in New York State. Lyme disease is caused by infection with the bacterial spirochete Borrelia burgdorferi. Nymphs are considered to be the most important stage for transmission because they are easily overlooked due to their small size. Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease usually appear within 1 to 2
weeks following an infected bite. The risk of contracting an infection from a tick is virtually zero during the first 24 hours of attachment, so promptly removing ticks can significantly reduce your chances of contracting Lyme disease. Lyme disease is treatable early on with antibiotics. Ticks that spread Lyme disease can be found in grassy, heavily wooded areas, leaf litter, shrubs and bushes. Stone walls, woodpiles and birdfeeders attract small animals that carry ticks. Common tick “hosts” are deer, mice, squirrels, rabbits and birds.

**Guidelines on Safe Tick Removal**

It is important to periodically check yourself, your children, and pets for ticks. Promptly removing a tick could reduce the likelihood of contracting certain types of tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease. It takes time for ticks to insert their mouthparts.

Using thin tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull gently and slowly away from the skin. Does not twist, jerk, or pull hard on the tick or you risk leaving the mouthparts in the skin. After tick removal, disinfect the bite wound. It is a good idea to save the tick in case it is necessary for later identification. Place the tick in a vial. If you experience a rash, headaches, fever and flu-like symptoms after a recent tick bite consult your physician. NEVER use petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, a lit match, rubbing alcohol, or similar substances to remove a tick. These methods are not effective and may cause the tick to regurgitate pathogens into the bite wound. Record the date and location of the tick bite and watch for early symptoms.

**Avoiding Ticks**

- Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks when walking in areas where ticks can be. Granted you may look a little dorky but better to be safe than sorry.
- Wear light colored clothing to help spot ticks
- Wear a hat, tuck in hair if possible.
- Use safe tick repellent on skin or clothes. Ask your pharmacist to recommend one.
- Do daily tick checks on your family and pets, especially after being outdoors.
- Shower using a wash cloth to dislodge unattached ticks.
- You can help cut down the tick population in your own backyard by mowing the grass, clearing brush and leaf litter, keeping the ground under bird feeders clean and stacking woodpiles neatly in dry areas.

Ticks can be submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Lab at Cornell University for identification. A $25.00 identification fee applies per sample. Please do not mail ticks in in alcohol due to mail regulations. The Diagnostic Laboratory does not test ticks for any disease agents. If you want the tick tested please check with your physician or local county health office for the names of laboratories performing tick-testing services.

资源: [http://idl.entomology.cornell.edu/factsheets/](http://idl.entomology.cornell.edu/factsheets/)