

# Control those Ticks

**T**icks are flattened, eight-legged biting pests that are often found on pets and people. Ticks are most commonly encountered when traveling through tick-infested fields and woods. To reduce the chance of bites or disease, remove ticks as soon as possible.

The brown dog tick is the most common tick in urban areas. Dogs and their backyard homes should be treated before these ticks become a problem. Infested animals should be treated by a veterinarian. Heavily infested dogs can die from loss of blood.

Because ticks usually feed on more than one host during their lives, they can transmit diseases to both people and animals. Some flea-transmitted diseases resemble the flu, others result in rashes, fever, or stiffness in the joints. If you experience any unusual rash or illness within a few days to weeks after being bitten by a tick, see a doctor and explain about the bite.

## **Ticks can cause:**

- Itching and inflammation (redness) of the skin
- Swelling around the bite
- Infections
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- Tularemia—a disease that affects the lymph nodes and causes fever
- Lyme disease—a disease that can cause arthritis and nervous disorders

## **Tick behavior**

Ticks find their victims by sitting on the edges of grass and shrubbery and climbing on passing people or animals. They do not drop out of trees. Cattle pastures, brushy areas and the edges of

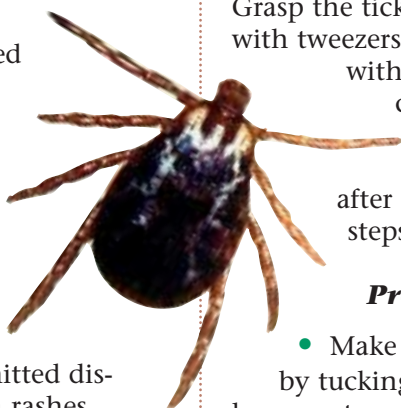
forests and fields are the best places for ticks. Ticks cement themselves to your skin when they bite. Hot matches, grease and other substances will not cause them to let go and may actually increase the risk of infection.

## **To remove ticks**

Grasp the tick as close to the head as possible with tweezers. Remove it with a firm, slow pull without twisting. Do not touch it or crush it with your bare hands because you may pick up germs. Apply an antiseptic to the skin after removing the tick. Follow the same steps to remove ticks from a pet.

## **Protect yourself and control ticks:**

- Make it harder for ticks to enter clothing by tucking shirttails inside pants and wearing long pants and shirts.
- Use duct tape or wide masking tape to seal pants cuffs to boots. Tucking your pants legs inside your socks is also effective.
- Avoid sitting on the ground or on logs in brushy, tick-infested areas. Ticks often crawl around on a host for hours before biting. When in tick-infested areas, have a friend check you frequently for ticks before they attach.
- Around the home, keep tall grass and weeds cut short. Ticks like to climb vertical surfaces to rest after feeding. When treating yards for brown dog ticks, spray the siding of the house, fences, trees and other hiding places as well as the lawn.
- When using insecticides, follow label directions carefully and do not apply more than is recommended. Tick insecticides can be dangerous to pets and children if misapplied.



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