

Field Safety Factsheet: Ticks

Ticks transmit pathogens through the process of feeding. After reaching a host, a tick can take from 10 minutes to 2 hours before it attaches and starts to feed. You may not feel a tick when it attaches due to the anesthetic properties of its saliva. If the tick is feeding in a sheltered spot, it can go unnoticed and unseen.

Most ticks require an extended feeding period before transmission of possible disease is complete. Therefore, prompt discovery and removal of attached ticks is essential to prevent disease transmission.



Bacteria/rickettsia transmission can occur in 18 hours to days

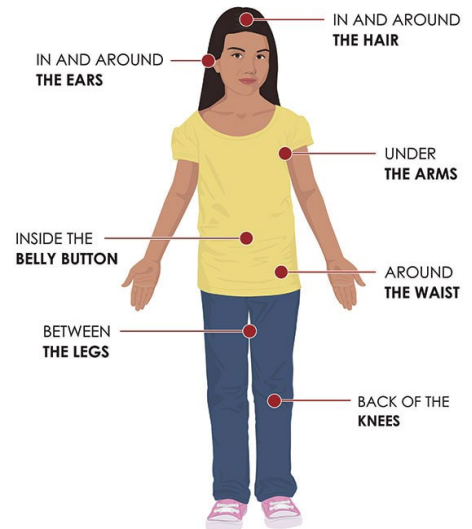
- Bartenellosis
- Ehrlichiosis
- Lyme disease
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Tularemia

Protozoa transmission can occur in 10 to 48 hours

- Anaplasmosis
- Babesiosis

Virus transmission can occur in as little as 15 minutes

- Powassan virus



Centers for Disease Control & Prevention—What to Do After a Tick Bite



<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/after-a-tick-bite/index.html>

- How to remove an attached tick
- Symptoms to look out for
- When to seek medical care

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection—About Ticks



<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/ProgramIntegration/Vector-Management/Ticks/Pages/default.aspx>

- Types of ticks in PA, tick biology and pathogens
- Prevention and personal protection

All the information on this fact sheet was adapted from materials found at the above linked sources along with <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>

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Prior to going out to field



Use EPA-registered insect repellents* containing DEET, icaridin/picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), or para-menthane-diol (PMD). If you are using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.



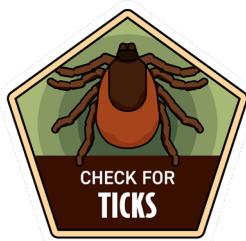
Cover skin with long-sleeve clothing and pants to minimize exposure. Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks to keep ticks on top of your clothing and off your skin. This will make it easier to see a tick before it can attach.



Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin*, an insecticide that is sprayed on your clothes only. It will kill ticks on contact and remains protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.

*repellents or insecticides may not be appropriate for use in some contexts (e.g. aquatic environments or handling insectivores)

After returning from field



Remove an attached tick as soon as possible. The longer a tick is attached the more likely it is to transmit pathogens it may be carrying. Conduct a full body check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body.



Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting tickborne diseases. Showering will help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.



Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Inspect then tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill remaining ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.