



Deer Hunter Fact Sheet Protection from Ticks

FACT SHEET 18-079-1115

Just the Facts... Ticks found on deer may spread diseases to people, pets and other animals. Germs that may be present in their saliva are transmitted as they feed on a person or animal. These germs include bacteria and viruses that cause such serious diseases as Lyme disease, Babesiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Human ehrlichiosis.

Even though the ticks are attached to the deer while it is alive, as the body temperature of the deer drops, ticks will release from your deer and seek another warm bodied host. The next warm bodied host could be you, another family member or your family pet.

How can I reduce the chances of bringing back ticks to my home after the hunt?

- Inspect your harvested deer for ticks prior to transport. Place your harvested deer on a large sheet of plastic or bed sheet that you can wrap around the entire animal. This will help to keep ticks and all potential external parasites (fleas, flies, lice or mites) contained. Discard this wrapping material after each harvest. Beds of pickup trucks provide an obvious barrier between you and any ticks that may have fallen off your deer during transport. However, ticks can survive long enough in your vehicle to later find another suitable host.
- If you typically bring your deer home to hang prior to butchering, hang your deer over a tub of water with a little added liquid dish detergent. Ticks on the deer will start dropping off and fall into the tub and die in the soapy water.
- If not contained, engorged female ticks could fall into your yard and lay eggs. After hatching, the immature ticks can create a local infestation around your home.



Photo: Peter Priolo

Note the numerous ticks including engorged females on the ears of this deer.

What do I do if there is a tick on me?

Remain calm, if the tick is only crawling on your skin or clothing grab and remove the tick. Ticks just crawling on you cannot transmit disease. While ticks are only attached to your body by their small mouthparts they are not easily removed. If you find an attached tick, make sure to remove it properly (see diagram right). While the tick is still attached do not squeeze its body or apply any substance to the tick (including petroleum jelly, nail polish, nail polish remover, alcohol, repellent, or a lighted match). After removing the tick, wash the wound site and apply topical antiseptic. Mouthparts sometimes break off and remain embedded. This will not increase the chances of disease but an antiseptic should be applied to prevent localized infection. You can also visit <http://www.tickcounter.org/> to see a video about tick removal.

If I find an attached tick, does it mean I will acquire a disease?

Not all ticks are infected, but you cannot tell if a tick is infected just by looking at it. Also, ticks need to be attached before they are able to transmit any diseases that they may be carrying; therefore, it is important to remove any tick that is attached to your skin as soon as possible.

Ticks removed from military personnel, their dependents, or DOD civilians can be turned in at military medical treatment facilities for identification and disease testing through the Army Public Health Center's DOD Human Tick Test Kit Program. For more information see: <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/envirohealth/epm/Pages/HumanTickTestKitProgram.aspx>

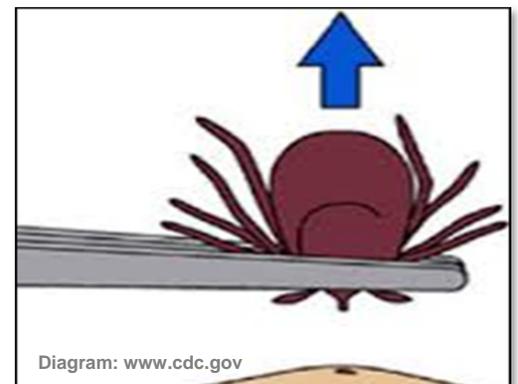


Diagram: www.cdc.gov

To safely remove a tick: Using pointy tweezers, grab the tick close to skin and use slow, steady motion to pull tick out. **DO NOT** twist, poke or burn the tick

What are common symptoms of tick-borne diseases?

Symptoms for tick-borne diseases are often flu-like and may include one or more of the following: fever, headache, fatigue, chills, rash (not always a bull's-eye shape), joint pain, muscle aches, loss of appetite, eye pain, vomiting, decreased concentration, memory loss, sleeplessness, restlessness, partial face paralysis (Bell's palsy) and delirium. If you know or suspect you may have been bitten by a tick and have any of these symptoms, seek medical attention.

Why are some ticks so much larger than other ticks?

The larger or swollen ticks are most likely engorged with blood. They often appear like a swollen pea, dull green to olive in color. Some ticks may also appear smaller depending on the species or their life cycle stage. Ticks have three stages in their lifecycle; the larva, nymph and adult. The adults being the largest of the three stages.

Additional Preventive measures include:

- Wear clothing treated with permethrin. Aerosol products containing 0.05% permethrin and permethrin impregnated garments are commercially available. When applying permethrin products to clothing, **always follow the directions for use printed on the label. DO NOT** apply permethrin to skin.
- Once ticks crawl onto you (they cannot fly or jump), they will climb upward until they find an opening in your clothing. Tuck pants inside boots and shirts inside pants to keep ticks out and away from your skin.
- **Use caution when handling your deer carcasses.** Wear waterproof gloves when field-dressing or butchering deer and DO NOT splash blood into your eyes, nose, or mouth, since these are also potential routes of infection.
- **Do not eat raw or rare game meat.** To kill potential food-borne disease, cook venison to an internal temperature of at least 160° F for ground meat and 145° F for chops, steaks and roasts.



Hunter with harvested deer displayed in back yard. As the deer body temperature drops, the attached ticks will release and seek a new host.

What are the standard military insect repellent products available for use on exposed skin?

- **Ultrathon™** (NSN 6840-01-284-3982) 33% controlled-release DEET lotion; one application protects for 12 hours.
- **Ultra 30 Insect Repellent Lotion** (NSN 6840-01-584-8393) contains 30% Lipo DEET; one application protects for up to 12 hours.
- **Cutter® pump spray** (NSN 6840-01-584-8598) contains 23% DEET; one application protects for up to 8 hours.
- **Sunsect** combination sunscreen & repellent (6840-01-288-2188) contains 20% DEET and SPF 15 sun protection.
- **Natrapel® pump spray** (NSN 6840-01-619-4795) contains 20% picaridin.



Standard military insect repellents for use on exposed skin come in a variety of formulations (left). All standard skin repellents contain the active ingredient DEET or picaridin and are registered by the USEPA. These products are safe to use and effective at repelling ticks. Photo: VID, APHC

What can I use to treat my clothing with permethrin?

Aerosol products containing 0.05% permethrin and permethrin-impregnated garments are commercially available for civilian use.

Where can I find additional information about ticks and tick-borne diseases?

- Army Public Health Center (APHC), Resource Material webpage at: <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/aid/Pages/ResourceMaterials.aspx>
- The Ohio Department of Natural resources web site at: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/species-and-habitats/ticks-in-ohio>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>