

# Protecting Against Tick Bites

## Before you go outside

**Make a plan:** What ticks could be in the habitat you're visiting? What repellents and other preventatives – physical, behavioral, etc... – will you use? What will you do if you find a crawling or attached tick in the woods, or even in the car when driving home?

- Here is a recent IL-Extension webinar with answers: [tinyurl.com/4djhkyp](https://tinyurl.com/4djhkyp)

**Know tick habitats:** Ticks often sit & wait for hosts to pass by – usually in ankle- to thigh-high grassy, brushy, woody vegetation. Sometimes they will run along the ground if a host is resting nearby. Ticks dry out easily so are found more often in shaded, humid places but they can occur in sun-exposed areas.

**Use EPA-registered tick repellents** formulated for skin and separately treat clothing & gear with specially-formulated 0.5% permethrin, according to CDC; see this webpage for detailed info: [www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/index.html)

**Remember, outdoor workers are at particularly high risk** – check out this NIOSH fact sheet on the topic: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-119/](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-119/)

Want to see where in Illinois we've found ticks?

Check out the maps:

<https://arcg.is/15fDSO>



## After you come indoors

**Clothing & gear: HEAT, not water, kills ticks.** Put clothing and gear in dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes – longer if damp; if you wash them first, use **hot water**. If you don't have access to a laundry, shake your clothes far from where you will sleep, check them for ticks, and hang outside.

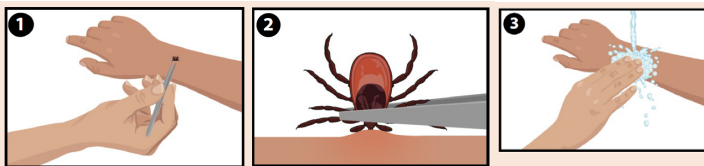
**Tick check:** conduct a full body check for ticks, pay careful attention to cracks and crevices (e.g., between toes); using a mirror can help.

**Shower:** within two hours of returning home, conduct another tick check by sight and fingertip feel during shower.

## For a healthy home - prevent ticks on pets

Talk to your veterinarian about the best tick prevention for your pet. Pets can bring ticks indoors and research indicates **pet owners are at increased risk** of encountering ticks. (Jones et al., 2018: DOI: 10.1111/zph.12369)

## From CDC - What to do if you find a tick attached



Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.

Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick.

After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

Kill a live tick by putting it in rubbing alcohol or placing it in a sealed bag/container. Save the tick for species identification and degree of tick engorgement (important when determining eligibility for Lyme disease prophylaxis).

### Additional notes from CDC

- Never crush a tick with fingers.
- If mouthparts break off, try tweezers to remove. If they can't be removed, leave alone and let skin heal.
- If symptoms develop, be sure to tell doctor about recent bite & circumstances.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/tickbornediseases/>

The INHS Medical Entomology Lab can provide free tick identifications for encounters that occurred in Illinois – see link to instructions below or scan QR code

<https://medical-entomology.inhs.illinois.edu/research/free-tick-identifications/>



Handout information adapted from: [www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html)

And [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tick-borne/default.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tick-borne/default.html)

More information from UIUC: [drs.illinois.edu/Page/SafetyLibrary/Ticks](https://drs.illinois.edu/Page/SafetyLibrary/Ticks)

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