

# Prevent Lyme disease and tick-borne illness

by Kate Evans

It's tick season now and the tiny critters wait for a potential host to brush against them near the ground, on tall grasses and in brush and wooded areas. To keep ticks away and prevent Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness, follow these recommendations:

Look for ticks when they are most active in late spring through early fall, but watch for them through late fall, mild winters and year-round.

Avoid tick-infested habitats such as wooded and brushy areas, tall grass and leaf litter.

Walk in the center of the trail when in the woods or high grass.

Wear long-sleeved shirts or jackets and long pants. Spray DEET insect repellent on shoes, hats and edges of sleeves and pants.

Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of clothing.

Wear light-colored clothing so ticks can easily be seen.

Check yourself, family members and pets for ticks daily, especially after being outdoors.

Check for ticks especially under the arms, in and around the ears, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, inside the bellybutton and on the hairline and scalp.

Remove attached ticks immediately and carefully. Use fine-tipped tweezers and pull upward with

steady, even pressure and without twisting or jerking. Thoroughly clean the area with rubbing alcohol, iodine or soap and water after tick removal.

Bathe within two hours of being outdoors to more easily find ticks on yourself. Examine gear and clothing for ticks after coming indoors.

Put clothes in the dryer for 10 minutes to kill ticks.

Mow the lawn frequently around homes and clear tall grasses and brush from yards and lawn borders. Keep the leaves raked.

Remove old furniture, mattresses and trash that could give ticks an area to hide.

Stack wood in a dry place to discourage rodents on which ticks feed.

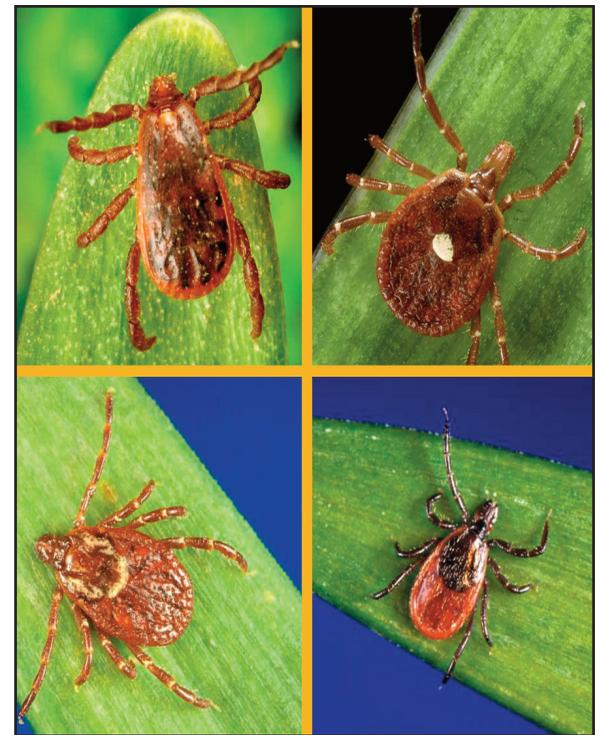
Don't feed the deer. They are a common host for the blacklegged tick that carries Lyme disease.

Plant tick-repelling plants and herbs such as lavender, marigolds, chamomile, sage, chrysanthemums, feverfew, lemon grass, citronella grass and catnip around your property.

Put down a three-foot wide barrier of wood chips, gravel or rocks between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and playground equipment to keep ticks from moving into recreational areas.

Talk to your veterinarian about tick control products for your pets and also have them checked and treated for Lyme disease.

Guinea hens and chickens eat ticks and may decrease your tick population if they are free-ranging.



Shown clockwise in this CDC tick montage are the Asian longhorned tick, the Lone Star tick, the black-legged tick (the deer tick) and the American dog tick.



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