

What do I do if a tick is biting me?

If you find a tick biting you, remove it as soon as you can. It takes some time for an attached tick to infect a person with disease-causing germs.

How to remove a tick:

- Grab the tick close to your skin with tweezers, tick removal tool, or a tissue and pull straight out, using a firm and steady motion.
- Wash your hands and the bite-site with soap and water.
- Apply an antibiotic ointment, cream, or rubbing alcohol to the bite site.
- Dispose of a live tick by placing it in rubbing alcohol or a sealed bag/ container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet.
- If you want to save the tick for identification or possible testing place it in a sealed bag or container.
- Never crush a tick with your fingers.



Timing is Everything!

Signs of a tick-borne disease:

- Most tick-borne diseases begin with flu-like symptoms that usually develop 2 to 14 days after being bitten.
- Some people with spotted fever or Lyme disease develop a rash.
- If you become ill with flu-like symptoms or a rash after spending time in tick areas or being bitten by a tick, see your doctor right away.
- Tick-borne diseases can be serious if not treated.



Prevent Tick Bites

Prevent Disease

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Why should I prevent tick bites?

The bite from an infected tick can cause disease in people. In California, the western blacklegged tick can transmit the bacteria that cause Lyme disease or anaplasmosis. The Pacific Coast tick, brown dog tick, and American dog tick can transmit the bacteria that cause spotted fever and tularemia.

You can reduce your risk of getting a tick-borne illness by protecting yourself from tick bites.

Ticks are most often found in natural areas with grasses, shrubs, logs, or fallen leaves, especially along trails. Ticks may also be found in picnic or recreation areas. Ticks wait (or “quest”) on vegetation, fallen logs, and sometimes wooden park benches for an animal or person to brush against them, then climb on to feed.



How do I prevent tick bites?

Before going into areas where ticks live:

- Apply insect repellent with at least 20% DEET on exposed skin and clothing.
- Treat your clothing, socks, and shoes/boots with permethrin. Permethrin kills any ticks that climb on your body.
- Pack a pair of tweezers or a tick removal tool.

While in areas where ticks live:

- Walk in the middle of trails and avoid brushing against high grasses and shrubs on the sides of trails.
- Check yourself carefully after sitting on wooden picnic tables and logs where ticks can be found.
- Check yourself often for ticks. If you find a tick crawling on you remove it as soon as possible.



After leaving areas where ticks live:

- Shower as soon as you can.
- Look for ticks on your body and in your bedding for 3 days. Some ticks are only the size of a poppy seed and can be anywhere on your body.
- Look in your armpits, in your hairline, behind your ears and knees, in your belly-button, and in your groin area.



Have a family member help check the areas on your body that you cannot easily see.

- Put the clothes you were wearing in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any ticks that may be on your clothes. Just washing your clothes may not kill ticks.
- Check your pets for ticks too, and place them on a tick control medicine as recommended by your veterinarian.

