

TICK SAFETY TIPS
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How does a tick find you?

As with mosquitoes, ticks find a host by seeking out carbon dioxide, that is put out through our skin.

How can you reduce the risk of a tick bite?

Deet can be very effective in masking the carbon dioxide excretion. However, this is not 100% effective. Use a product with at least 30% Deet. Do not use a product with more than 30% Deet, as it can cause skin reactions. Wear light-colored clothing when possible. Tuck your pants into your socks.

After being in the woods, always check your entire body for any ticks, including crevices. Have a loved one carefully check your hair with a fine-toothed comb. You should also check your body for ticks after playing with a dog, that has access to wooded type areas.

How do I remove a tick?

Grasp the tick with tweezers and slowly pull on the tick, at a 90 degree angle. As you pull the tick will let go. If the head remains imbedded in the skin, attempt to remove the head with tweezers. If you encounter difficulty removing the head, seek medical attention from a health care provider to ensure the removal is complete. If you remove the tick within 24 hours this greatly decreases your odds of developing Lyme Disease.

What are tick removal methods I should not use?

Do not use fire, or a hot match.

You do not have to cover the tick with vaseline or nail polish, as that will not increase the speed in which the tick will back out and remove itself.

What are the symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?

Usually within 2 - 14 days a fever will develop. A rash only occurs in 87% of the cases. The rash usually develops around the 5th or 6th day and is seen around the wrists, ankles, forearms, soles of the feet, palms of the hands and spreads rapidly to the trunk and buttocks last. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are not uncommon. The symptoms usually come on quickly.

What are the symptoms of Lyme Disease?

Stage I - the Lyme Disease Rash (Erythema Migrans) is usually around 5 centimeters or greater in diameter. The rash has a bulls eye appearance with a central clearing pale area in the middle, surrounded by a pale to bright red rash. This area may or may not itch or be tender to touch. Only about 70% of individuals who have Lyme Disease experience the rash. It generally takes 7 - 10 days, but may take as long as 28 - 30 days, after the tick bites to develop erythema migrans. Allergic reactions can also be confused with erythema migrans. A temperature may occur.

Stage II - usually occurs within weeks after infection. 50% of patients will encounter

numerous rashes on their body. Sometimes blistering will also occur. Fever, swollen lymph nodes and nausea and vomiting may occur, as well as an enlarged spleen. Severe headaches are not uncommon. Dizziness, emotional changes, insomnia, muscle aches and pains and joint pain may occur. During this phase it is easy to confuse Lyme Disease with a generalized virus. Heart problems develop in 4 - 7% of patient with untreated Lyme Disease, within 3 - 21 weeks. 60% of untreated Lyme Disease patients develop arthritis after 4 weeks to 2 years.

Stage III - usually begins a year or more after the Lyme rash first appears and the patient is untreated. Chronic arthritis is common in 50% of the patients. Although rare strokes, seizures and severe dementia may occur. This phase can last many years, even decades.

What should I do if I have symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or Lyme Disease? You should seek medical attention from a health care provider immediately. Prompt treatment with antibiotic therapy greatly decreases the risk of further complications.

Information for this article was obtained from Survive Outdoors, Inc. Their website, which has lots of information for the outdoorsman, can be found at www.surviveoutdoors.com.