

# Tick Fact Sheet - How to Keep Your Family Safe

- Ticks are most active when the weather warms up in the spring and can remain active until freeze-up occurs.
- The ticks you are most likely to find in Saskatchewan are dog ticks (sometimes referred to as “wood ticks”). Dog ticks do not transmit Lyme disease and are most active from spring to early summer.
- Black-legged ticks, sometimes referred to as “deer ticks” are not common in Saskatchewan, and are smaller than dog ticks. Black-legged ticks can carry Lyme disease. Only a small percentage of black-legged ticks carry Lyme disease. These ticks can be active from late spring through to October or November.
- You should protect yourself from bites from all kinds of ticks.



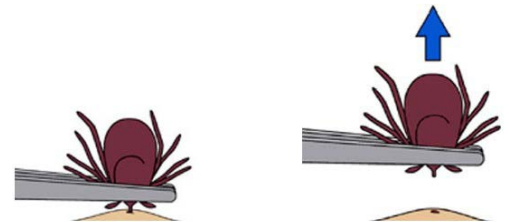
## What can you do to protect yourself from ticks?

- Wear clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible (long sleeves/pants, closed toed shoes, hats, etc.) and wear light coloured clothing to make the ticks easier to spot.
- Tuck your pants into socks and wear shirts that fit tightly around your wrists.
- Use an insect repellent with DEET or Icaridin and follow the manufacturer’s directions on use. Do not use DEET repellents on infants under six months of age.
- Avoid walking, working, playing in long grass and overgrown brush; stay in the centre of the trail when hiking.
- Regularly check yourself, your children, and your pets for ticks before coming indoors.
- After activities where tick exposure is possible:
  - Remove clothes, shower, and do a thorough tick check. Some ticks are quite small (the size of a pin-head or freckle), so look carefully.
  - Wash and then dry all clothes on the hottest setting to kill any ticks. Also check for ticks on any gear you had with you in the woods
- You can protect your pets by using Tick and Flea collars or oral tick treatments prescribed by a veterinarian. Keep them out of wooded areas and long grass. You should check your pets regularly and remove any ticks you find.

## How can I remove ticks?

Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but are often found in hard-to-see areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp.

- Remove attached ticks as soon as you find them.
- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grab the head and mouth as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull up slowly with steady pressure until the tick is completely removed from the skin.
- Do not twist or jerk the tick.
- Make sure the whole tick is removed.
- Wash the bite area with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol or household antiseptic.
- **Do not use:** nail polish, petroleum jelly, or heat to make the tick detach from the skin.



## What are the health risks from a tick bite?

- Most ticks do not carry disease.
- Completely removing the tick as soon as possible helps prevent a skin infection where you were bit.
- There are no significant risks from dog tick bites but some people can develop a mild allergic reaction with itching, redness, and swelling.
- A small percentage of black-legged ticks carry Lyme disease. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 24-36 hours before the Lyme disease is transmitted; which is why checking for and removing ticks daily is important.
- Symptoms of Lyme disease may include a skin rash (may look like a “bullseye”), fever or chills, headache, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes and joint pain.
- Later symptoms may include dizziness, abnormal heartbeat, mental confusion or inability to think clearly, nervous system disorders involving the brain, nerves and spinal cord.

**If you are concerned about symptoms you or a family member have after a tick bite, you should contact Saskatchewan HealthLine at 811 or speak with your health care provider.**