

## Ticks!

The air is warmer, the robins are here, and the flowers will soon be in bloom. Everyone is just a little bit happier and all our thoughts turn to ticks. TICKS?? Yes, it is that time of year again. Here are a few facts about ticks that should make your spring, summer, and fall a little easier and hopefully tick free.

### Tick Facts:

Ticks are active at temperatures above 35 degrees. Despite popular belief, they do not die off in the winter! We do not see them much because of snow cover, but during a mild winter you should not let your guard down.

It is very difficult to tell one tick from another. If you find a tick on you, assume it will carry Lyme disease. See your doctor and have him or her evaluate whether you need treatment.

The ticks that are the most concerning are the “nymphal” stage ticks. These ticks are very small, about the size of a poppy seed! They may be difficult or impossible to locate. These ticks are most active from May through July. You should look particularly carefully that time of year for any unusual “spots”.

Ticks love shady and leafy vegetation. Ticks do not jump, fly or actively pursue a meal. They are very, very patient and wait for a meal to come to them. Wearing light colored clothing and tucking your pants into your socks when you are in the woods helps prevent ticks from becoming attached and helps you locate them more easily.

### Looking for Ticks:

When examining yourself for ticks, check everywhere! Check places that bend, like elbows and knees, between your fingers and toes and under your arms. Check the top of your head and in the hairline. The back of the neck is a frequent site of attachment. Don't forget to check your belly button and the folds of your ears. You might not think of these areas but a tick will! Remember to carefully check places that your clothes touch your skin like waist and wrist bands. When you have completed your inspection, check again! Run your fingers gently over your skin. You may feel a tick you can't see.

### Removing Ticks:

To remove a tick, grasp as close to the skin as possible with a pair of fine tweezers and gently pull. You are much stronger than the tick! If the head remains attached it can still transmit Lyme and needs to be removed. DO NOT squeeze or twist! Using a burnt match or applying Vaseline does not work and may make removal more difficult.

Parents, consider making a nightly bath for your young children a ritual. Besides being fun, it makes tick inspection easier!

Remember, tuck your pants into your socks and wear light colored clothing while in the woods. Use products containing DEET as a tick repellent. Don't let the fear of lyme disease or a tick bite keep you from the great outdoors! Simply be diligent with your nightly inspection for ticks and don't forget to look EVERYWHERE! It's spring, HAVE FUN!