



Tick Prevention, Removal and Testing



GENERAL INFORMATION

Ticks are significant vectors of pathogens that cause human disease. In Michigan, tick-borne diseases are rare, but they do occur and can be serious if not properly diagnosed and treated. There have been recent fatal cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia in the state.

Ticks are arthropods (relatives of insects) and belong to the order Acari, families Ixodidae (the hard ticks) and Argasidae (the soft ticks). The most commonly encountered ticks in Michigan are hard ticks. Tick habitat is usually associated with their animal hosts, especially in areas where woodlands and grasslands converge and where deer, raccoons, and other wildlife are abundant. They typically can be found in wooded or grassy areas, especially along the edges of trails, roads and yards.

Dermacentor variabilis ticks (commonly called wood ticks or dog ticks) are most abundant in spring and early summer.

Ixodes scapularis, (Black Legged ticks) are most abundant from spring through the summer, and into the warm months of the fall.

However, ticks have been found on Michigan residents or their pets in all months of the year.

It is important to inform a physician if you are ill and have had recent exposure to ticks. This information can be crucial for accurately

diagnosing disease. Diseases carried by ticks to people and domestic animals are "reportable diseases"; physicians, veterinarians and laboratories that diagnose these conditions are required to report them to local health departments, and animal health regulatory officials, who in turn, report these conditions to the Michigan Department of Community Health.



Erythema migrans (EM) is a red, circular, rapidly expanding patch that appears at the site of the tick bite within 3 days to 1 month after the bite of an infected tick. It is usually not painful or itchy.

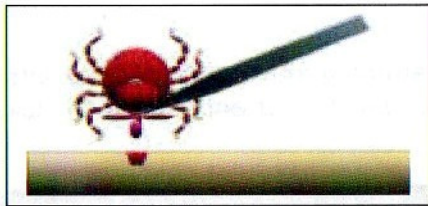
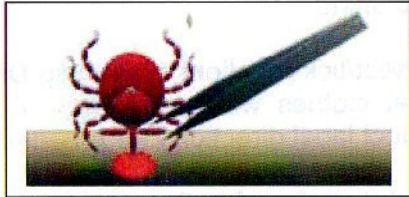
TICK REMOVAL

Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but prefer body creases and areas with hair such as the groin, armpits, sock line and scalp.

To remove attached ticks, use the following procedure:

1. Using fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick by the head as close to the skin as possible then gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick, apply petroleum jelly, a hot match, or

other irritants. This can lead to infection because the tick's mouth parts may remain embedded, or you may be burned. Use your fingernails and tissue paper if tweezers are not available.



2. Immediately wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water then apply an antiseptic to the bite wound.
3. If in doubt of tick identification, place the tick in a small vial containing a damp piece of tissue and submit it to your local health department for examination.

PREVENTION

- Wear enclosed shoes and light colored clothing which makes ticks easier to locate for removal.
- Tuck pants into socks and wear long-sleeved shirts.
- Apply insect/tick repellent containing DEET, and treat clothes with permethrin. Follow the product label directions for proper use.
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid contact with overgrown grass and brush at trail edges.
- Upon returning from potentially tick-infested areas, search your entire body for ticks.

TICK IDENTIFICATION AND TESTING

Expert tick identification is available at a number of state agencies. For tick identification and possible testing for certain tick-related diseases, contact your local health department.

*This information has been provided to you
by:*

Michigan Department of Community Health
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Department of Agriculture
Michigan State University