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Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against tickborne diseases. Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during warmer months (April-September). You and your family can take several steps to prevent tick bites.

Before you go outdoors

Know where to expect ticks. Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.

Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. EPA's helpful insect-repellents can help you find the product that best suits your needs. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old.

Avoid contact with ticks. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in the center of trails.

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After you come indoors

Check your clothing for ticks. Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing. Any ticks that are found should be removed. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.

Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and daypacks.

Shower soon after being outdoors. Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting [Lyme disease](#) and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.

Check your body for ticks after being outdoors. Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:

- Under the arms
- In and around the ears
- Inside belly button
- Back of the knees
- In and around the hair
- Between the legs
- Around the waist

Reduce risk of tick exposure around homes

Apply pesticides outdoors to control ticks. Use of pesticides can reduce the number of ticks in treated areas of your yard. However, you should not rely on spraying to reduce your risk of infection. When using pesticides, always follow label instructions. Before spraying, check with local health or agricultural officials about rules and regulations regarding pesticide application on residential properties.

Create a tick-safe zone to reduce black-legged ticks in the yard.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has developed a comprehensive [Tick Management Handbook \[PDF – 84 pages\]](#) for preventing tick bites. Here are some simple landscaping techniques that can help reduce blacklegged tick populations:

- Remove leaf litter.
- Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Mow the lawn frequently.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area (discourages rodents).
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees.
- Discourage unwelcome animals (such as deer, raccoons, and stray dogs) from entering your yard by constructing fences.
- Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/prevention/index.html>