



Ticks

What is a tick?

- Ticks are very small external parasites that can bite and cling to humans and their pets.
- When a tick bites, it will latch on to the host for 3-10 days.
- Tick bites are often painless and not easy to notice.
- Ticks can be very small (the size of a pin head)
- There are many types of ticks, but most of the ticks in Saskatchewan are the American dog tick, with the occasional winter tick (moose tick) and Rocky Mountain wood tick.
- In northern Saskatchewan we have never found the type of ticks that can carry Lyme disease (black-legged ticks).

Why should someone be concerned about a tick bite?

- Ticks can carry a number of diseases that can cause illness in humans, but these illnesses are rare in northern areas. These diseases can be more common in other parts of North America (Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, etc.)
- The longer a tick stays attached, the higher the risk that disease can be transmitted.
- Not all tick species carry all diseases – for example in Saskatchewan only 50 ticks of the species able to carry Lyme disease have been found in the last 8 years, only a few of those were found with the Lyme disease germ and all were in the south of the province.

ALWAYS DO A TICK CHECK OF PEOPLE AND PETS WHEN YOU COME BACK FROM BEING OUTDOORS.

How can you avoid being bitten by a tick?

From the time the temperature starts to warm up (above 4°C) through to freeze-up –

When going outdoors especially in tall grass or bush:

- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and closed-toe footwear.
- Tuck pants into socks to prevent ticks from crawling up into your pant leg.
- Wear light-colored clothing (ticks are seen best on light fabric).
- Use insect repellent (with DEET or Icaridin) as per the instruction on the label.
- Try and stay on well-trodden paths and avoid contact with tall grass and overgrown brush.

When returning from outdoors:

- Do a full body tick check on:
 - o You
 - o Your children
 - o Your pets
- If a tick is found, remove it.
- To remove ticks from clothing put your clothes in a hot dryer or hang them out in the sun on a hot day for at least 15 minutes - the heat can kill the ticks.
- Check the gear you brought with you into the woods for any ticks.

IF YOU FIND A TICK, IT'S A GOOD PRACTICE TO TAKE IT OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TICK PASSING ON DISEASE.

How to remove a tick?

- [Carefully remove with fine-tipped tweezers](#) and grasp the mouth of the tick right at the skin surface.
- Pull the tick away from the skin with a firm steady pressure. Do not twist or angle while pulling.
- Do not handle the tick with bare hands and do not crush, squeeze or puncture the tick after removal.
- If you wish to have the tick tested, place in a secure container and see “Getting a tick tested”.
- To destroy a tick, place it in a container with chlorine solution and seal.

Getting a tick tested

- If you wish to have a tick you have found sent for testing:
 1. Collect tick (without touching it with bare skin) into a plastic bag and include a few scraps of wet paper.
 2. Contact the Population Health Unit at (306) 425-8512 or by [email](#) to arrange that you get a tick testing kit and instructions on how to send for testing.
- It can take up to 6-8 weeks for a result.

For information on Lyme Disease please visit [Lyme Disease in Saskatchewan](#) or [Lyme Disease in Canada](#)