



Greene County Public Health

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Press Release

For Immediate Release
May 28, 2024

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Public Health Officials Share Information on Ticks, Related Diseases

XENIA, OH – Now that the warmer weather is here, Greene County Public Health officials remind you to take preventive measures against ticks. Some ticks can transmit serious and possibly fatal diseases. In Ohio, these include: Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis and babesiosis. These diseases can be transmitted only by the bite of an infected tick. An infected animal or person cannot pass the infection on to another animal or person. Use caution when removing ticks from pets and be sure to check yourself and loved ones after spending time in ticks' habitats.

Preventing tick bites for you and your family

While it is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April through September) when ticks are most active. The Ohio Department of Health suggests four steps: Protect, Check, Remove, and Watch.

PROTECT

- Avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents that contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin, or IR3535 labelled for use against ticks on exposed skin and clothing for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding their hands, eyes and mouth.
- Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5 percent permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pretreated clothing is available and may provide longer lasting protection.
- Wear long pants, long sleeves, and long socks. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and tuck shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of your clothing. Light colored clothing will help you spot ticks more easily.

CHECK

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Greene County



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- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist and especially in their hair.
- 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 day packs.
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for ten minutes to kill remaining ticks on dry clothing. If clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended.

REMOVE

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

WATCH

- Watch for symptoms of tickborne diseases.
- Symptoms may vary, but most often include fever, headache, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue, or a rash soon after a tick bite.
- Watch for symptoms of different diseases to begin at different times after a tick bite:
 - Anaplasmosis – 5-21 days
 - Babesiosis – 7-56 days
 - Ehrlichiosis – 5-10 days
 - Lyme disease – 3-30 days
 - Rocky Mountain spotted fever – 5-10 days
- Contact your health provider if symptoms develop. Tell them if you had a tick bite or found a tick on you, and tell them about your outdoor activities.

Create a Tick-Safe Zone around your Home

You can make your yard less attractive to ticks. Here are some simple landscaping techniques that can help reduce ticks.

- Clear tall grasses and brush around home and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment. This will restrict tick migration into recreational areas.

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- Mow the lawn regularly and keep leaves raked.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area. This discourages rodents that ticks feed on.
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees and place them in a sunny location, if possible.
- Remove any old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.

Preventing tick bites on your pets

Dogs are susceptible to tick bites and tick-borne diseases. Except for Lyme disease, vaccines are not available for most of the tick-borne diseases that dogs can get, and they can't keep the dogs from bringing ticks into your home. For these reasons, it's important to use a tick-preventive product on your dog.

Tick bites on dogs may be hard to detect. Signs of tick-borne disease may not appear for 7 to 21 days or longer after a tick bite, so watch your dog closely for changes in behavior or appetite if you suspect that your pet has been bitten by a tick.

To reduce the chances that a tick will transmit disease to you or your pets:

- Check your pets for ticks daily, especially after they spend time outdoors.
- If you find a tick on your dog, remove it right away.
- Ask your veterinarian to conduct a tick check at each exam.
- Talk to your veterinarian about tick-borne diseases in your area.
- Reduce tick habitat in your yard.
- Talk with your veterinarian about using tick preventives on your pet.

Note: Cats are extremely sensitive to a variety of chemicals. Do not apply any insect repellents to your cats without first consulting your veterinarian.

For further information, please call 937-374-5600 or visit ohio.gov/tick. Additional health information can be found on the health district's website www.gcph.info, Facebook, and Twitter pages.

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