

Protecting Against Ticks

When outdoors people often become exposed to ticks. Several things can be done to prevent tick bites. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long-legged pants in areas infested by ticks. Tuck pants legs into socks and shirttails into pants. As ticks climb they cannot get beneath the clothing. Use repellants to discourage ticks. Remain on trails wherever possible. Check frequently for ticks on the body and scalp; those on the scalp are often overlooked.

Controlling Ticks

Usually ticks are a problem around the home because a pet dog has carried them into the yard or house. Female ticks on the animal feed, drop-off and lay eggs. The eggs hatch and thousands of larval ticks seek a meal - usually from the dog. Controlling ticks around the home means keeping the pets free of ticks with the use of a suitable dip, dust, or shampoo and a tick collar. Ticks are also a problem when deer are abundant.

Veterinarians have very good treatments against ticks that are applied to a pet's skin or given by mouth. Dogs can be 'deticked' by hand, but remember to protect your fingers or use tweezers as described below. An insecticide labeled for tick control can be used when ticks have become a problem around the home. Brush, long grass and leaf litter are places where ticks may rest or wait for a host. Removing this material by cutting, bagging or burning will help control ticks.

Proper Removal Of Ticks

The best way to remove ticks from a person or pet is to grasp the tick firmly with tweezers as close as possible to where it is attached to the skin. Fingers may also be used if protected by a tissue because fluids from the tick could transmit disease. Slowly and steadily, pull the tick straight up. Do not twist; this will break-off the mouthparts. Wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water. Note the date of the tick bite, in case of any signs of illness. Once a tick has become firmly attached to the skin, the use of vaseline, fingernail polish, kerosene or a hot match will not dislodge it.

It may be helpful to save the tick for identification should signs of illness develop. The tick can be placed in a sealable plastic bag and placed in the freezer. Make sure to include a piece of paper with the date of the bite inside the plastic bag..

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Contact your local health department or the Public Health Pest Management Section at (919) 733-6407.



*N.C. Department of Environment
and Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Health
Public Health Pest Management Section
[http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/
phpm/index.htm](http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm/index.htm)*

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Ticks



Some Facts

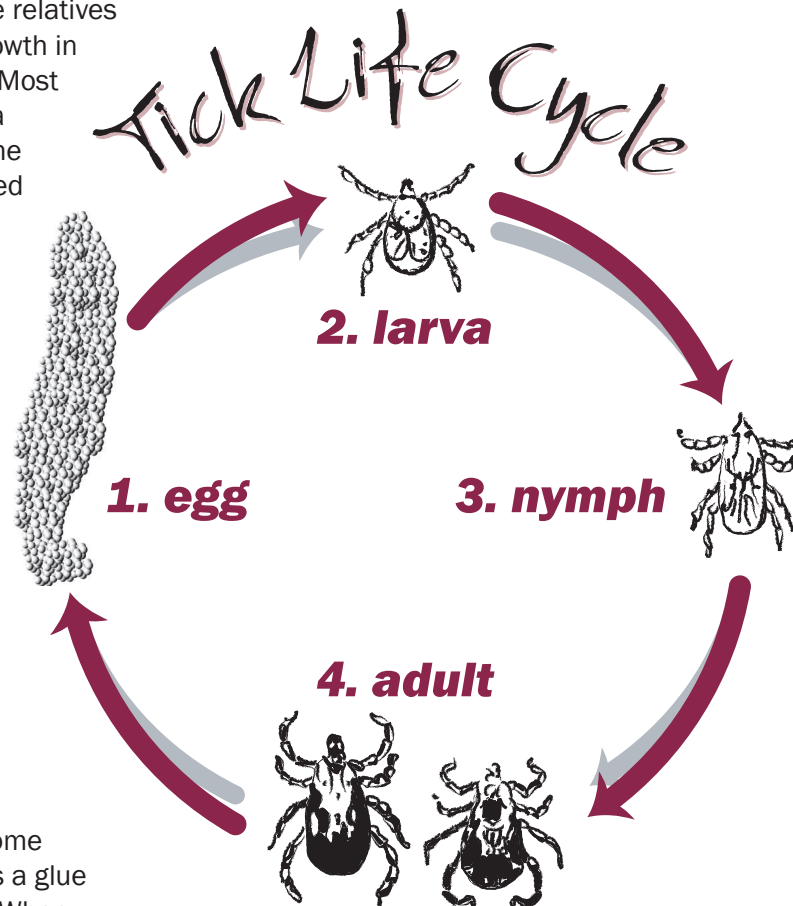
Ticks are annoying and are major carriers of disease in North Carolina.

Here are some facts about ticks.

Tick Biology

Ticks are arachnids that are close relatives of spiders. There are four stages of growth in the tick: egg, larva, nymph and adult. Most common ticks in North Carolina have a similar life cycle. After hatching from the egg, the larva, sometimes called a 'seed tick,' searches for an animal from which to take a meal. Depending upon the kind of tick, the source of this meal will vary. Not all ticks will attack humans; each stage may attack a different type of animal. The larval tick feeds, drops from the animal (or host) and soon enters the nymphal stage. The hungry nymph seeks another meal. After dropping from the host, the fed nymph soon becomes an adult. Adults again seek a host animal to feed on. When feeding, the tick firmly attaches itself to the skin.

The mouthparts of the tick are barbed like a fish hook and once in place become hard to remove. The tick also produces a glue that holds the mouthparts in the skin. When attached, the tick begins to suck blood. If not removed, the adult female tick will remain attached five to seven days. During this time it may become four times greater in size and 100 times greater in weight! The male tick also feeds but not as much as the female. Mating takes place on the host. After feeding, the female drops from the host animal. About



a week later, it may lay as many as three to 4,000 eggs. Then the female tick dies. Eggs hatch in about a week. Depending upon the type of tick, the cycle from egg to adult may take several months or years.

Ticks And Disease

Ticks are major carriers of disease in North Carolina such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF), ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis and Lyme Disease. Southern tick associated rash illness (STARI) is also found in the state.

All of these diseases can be easily treated with antibiotics, if diagnosed early. It is important to remember the date when a tick has bitten. A flu-like illness two to 30 days after the bite could mean the start of a tick-carried disease; a physician should be seen. An unusual problem called tick paralysis occurs when a feeding tick produces a toxin (poison) that affects certain nerves. This is rare in people, but often found in dogs. Removing the tick stops the paralysis.