

Hanover County Safety & Risk Focus



Tick Borne Illness & Tick Bite Prevention

The onset of spring weather always brings with it longer days and increased opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with friends and family. These changes not only benefit us as individuals in many positive ways, but they also awaken nature, most specifically, the critters and bugs that, if not appropriately prepared, can place a damper this seasonal transition. Of particular concern is exposure to one of the more common bacteria carrying insects, ticks. Ticks are carriers of multiple types of tick-borne diseases in the U.S., Lyme Disease being the most common and is caused by a bacterium that is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick.

Tick exposure can occur year-round, but ticks are most active during the warmer months of April through Sept. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 36 to 48 hours or more before the bacteria that causes Lyme disease can be transmitted. If you remove a tick quickly, within 24 hours, the chances of getting Lyme disease are reduced. Ticks can attach to any part of the body but are often found in hard-to-see areas like the armpits, scalp, and other similar areas.

Lyme disease can present a variety of symptoms, depending on the stage of the infection, and the symptoms are not the same for everyone. Lyme disease symptoms can include:

- Flu-like symptoms including fever, chills, fatigue, muscle, and joint aches.
- Rash that may have a “bullseye” appearance (or may look different)
- Headache and neck stiffness
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Arthritis with joint pain and swelling.
- Heart palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness and shortness of breath

Anyone who begins to show symptoms of a suspected tick-borne infection should seek medical attention early. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.

To limit the potential for exposure to ticks & tick bites, it is important to protect yourself before going outdoors.

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are more visible.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and tuck pants into socks or boots. This can delay the ticks from reaching the skin so they can be found more easily before attaching. Wear boots or closed-toed shoes and a hat for the same reason.
- Use appropriate insect repellents on the body and on clothes. Avoid touching ticks as much as possible while outdoors. Avoid brushy, overgrown grassy, and woody areas, particularly in spring and early summer when young ticks feed. After working in an area that may have ticks, it is important to take precautions once indoors.
- Examine clothing, your body, and your gear for ticks. Ticks can ride indoors on clothing and supplies and attach to a person later. Do not forget to check your hair, underarms, belly button, and groin.
- Remove any attached ticks promptly and carefully with fine-tipped tweezers by gripping the tick as close to the skin as possible. Clean the skin well after tick removal.
- Shower after work, as soon as possible after being outdoors.
- Wash and dry work clothes at a hot temperature to kill any ticks that were missed.

Safety & Risk Quote of the Month:



Safety & Risk Resources

Below are some additional resources for review & use on Tick Borne Illness Prevention:

- [Five Tips to prevent Tick Bites & Getting Lyme Disease – Johns Hopkins \(Video\)](#)
- [Preventing Tick Bites – US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)