

You are taking a field trip in an area that may expose you to blacklegged ticks.



Vermont has one of the highest incidence rates of Lyme disease in the U.S.A. Over 50% of ticks in Vermont are infected with *B. burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Ticks also may be infected with other pathogens that can cause illness. The Vermont Department of Health recommends the following to prevent tick bites:

Please remember to:

- ✓ Use repellents that are labeled for ticks
- ✓ Wear light colored clothing so that it is easier to spot ticks
- ✓ Tuck pants into socks, and your shirt into pants
- ✓ Wear hats and place long hair in braids to minimize access for ticks
- ✓ Avoid walking through high grass and bushy areas and sitting on logs or rocks, or against trees
- ✓ Use a blanket or tarp to avoid sitting directly on the ground
- ✓ CONDUCT A DAILY TICK CHECK
- ✓ Tick check your backpack, lunchbag, and clothing prior to getting into a vehicle or entering your home
- ✓ Place exposed clothing and gear directly into dryer (not washer!) on high heat for 10-20 minutes to kill ticks that may be clinging to the fabric
- ✓ Shower as soon as possible after you come inside if you have been in a tick habitat
- ✓ Tell a teacher or other adult if you are bitten by a tick

To safely remove ticks

- ✓ Use fine-tipped tweezers and firmly grasp the tick close to the skin.
- ✓ Avoid touching the tick with your bare hands.
- ✓ With a steady motion, pull straight up until all parts of the tick are removed.
- ✓ Do not twist or jerk the tick.
- ✓ Do not be alarmed if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit the Lyme disease bacteria. DO NOT use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick. These methods are not effective.

After removing the tick

- ✓ Thoroughly wash your hands and the bite area.
- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- ✓ Clean the tick bite with soap and water or use an antiseptic such as iodine scrub or rubbing alcohol.
- ✓ Watch for any signs of infection at the site of the tick bite
- ✓ Watch for signs and symptoms of tickborne diseases. According to the Vermont Department of Health these can occur weeks, months or years after infection.

The Vermont Department of Health does not recommend saving ticks, but some people choose to save the tick in a plastic bag, along with a note marking the location and date of the tick bite, in case further testing of the is warranted.

For more information, and access to information about tick bite prevention, please visit www.VTLyme.org. Thank you for doing your part to help prevent Lyme and tickborne diseases in Vermont!