

TICK TALK TAILGATE

Protecting Yourself and your Workers from Ticks & Lyme Disease

Points to emphasize in this Tailgate Talk

- ☒ **Tick habitat is expanding rapidly in Ontario** – areas of the province that were once thought to be free from ticks that might carry Lyme Disease are now considered higher risk.
- ☒ **Lyme Disease is a serious, potentially life changing illness** – but there are easy and practical solutions to protect yourself, your coworkers, and employees.
- ☒ **It's important to take precautions when working outside** – especially in areas that have a high chance of being tick habitat.

Note to Employers

Under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#), employers are responsible to take all precautions reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of a worker, including delivering training to workers when there is a risk present on how to prevent tick bites and providing tick deterrents.

Record-keeping: use the [Record of Training sheet](#) below to document who received the training. Remember to regularly follow up with employees to ensure they turn this training into action.

What you'll need for this Tailgate Talk

- a. Print off the pictures and guides below to show workers during the presentation.
- b. Bottle/can of repellent containing DEET or Icaridin.
- c. Fine-tipped tweezers to demonstrate proper tick removal.

INTRODUCTION (1 minute)

Kick-off

- Gather everyone together - this talk takes about 15 minutes, ideal for a quick reminder before starting outdoor work.

Why are we here?

- We're here to talk about the hazards and risks of ticks when working outside.
- Ticks can carry Lyme disease and other less common but serious diseases, so it's crucial we all know how to prevent bites and act quickly if bitten.

KEY MESSAGES & DEMONSTRATIONS (10 minutes)

1. What are Ticks? Where do they live? When are they active?

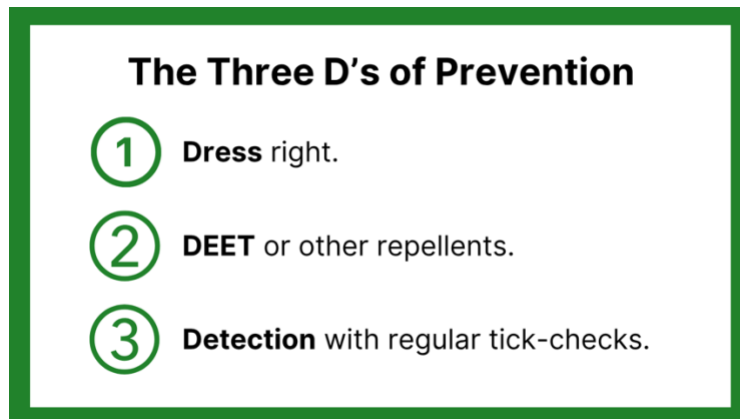
- A tick is a tiny, blood-sucking arachnid (eight legs like a spider) that attaches itself to mammals, birds, and reptiles to feed and sometimes transmit diseases.
 - *Visual 1 – Blacklegged Tick*: show and pass around image of Blacklegged Tick noting different sizes and life stages.
- Ticks tend to hide in tall grass, shrubs, field edges, and forested patches - they are active from spring through to fall but especially in warm, humid months.
 - *Note: look around your farm and point out any locations that match this description and ask employees if they know of any others.*
- There are over 40 tick species in Canada, however, the one we worry about is called the Blacklegged Tick.
 - *Visual 2 – Map*: Blacklegged Tick Establishment Risk Areas for Southern Ontario.
- **Key point**: ticks are sneaky and can attach quickly. Unlike mosquitos and other biting insects they can often go unnoticed.

2. Preventing Tick Bites

- **Dress smart**: light-coloured long sleeves and pants tucked into socks make ticks easier to see and harder for them to reach skin.
- **Use repellents**: DEET- or Icaridin-based sprays work well - apply to skin and outer clothing.
- **Demonstration**: show how to tuck pants into socks and how to spray repellent properly.

3. Daily Self-Check for Ticks

- **Detection:** do a tick check daily when in tick risk areas - ankles, legs, waistline, armpits, hairline, behind ears, and knees every day, especially after being in areas with long grass.
 - *Visual 3 – Where to check for Ticks.*



4. Tick removal – what to do if you find a tick on you

- **How to remove:** use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick close to the skin and pull straight up with steady pressure - don't twist or squeeze.
 - *Visual 4 – How to properly remove a tick.*
- **Clean and report:** wash bite area with soap and water or alcohol. If possible, place the tick in a sealed container for identification (optional, but useful).
 - Let managers (or supervisors) know. We are going to want to record the date of encounter and if possible, submit the tick for identification.
- **Key point:** it's important not to panic. There is a proper technique to removing a tick that will decrease the chances of spreading Lyme or other diseases.

5. Watch for Symptoms

- **Timeline:** symptoms of Lyme Disease may appear 3 to 30 days after a tick bite. This is why we want to record the date.
- **Signs include:** expanding red rash (often bull's-eye shape), fever, chills, fatigue, headaches, muscle or joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes (appears as a bump under your jaw below the ear).
- **Action:** if symptoms show up, see a doctor immediately and mention you work outdoors and may have been exposed to ticks.

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS (3 minutes)

- "Has anyone found a tick on themselves before? What did you do?"
- "Which body areas are easiest to miss (hardest to search) when checking for ticks?"
- Encourage sharing experiences and concerns - this promotes participation and reinforces learning.
- **Quiz time:** as a quick way of testing your employees in the context of other insects and spiders they may encounter in the field.
 - *Visual 5 – Find the Tick.*

REVIEW & DOCUMENTATION (1 minute)

- a. Wear protective clothing and repellent.
- b. Stick to clear paths.
- c. Self-check daily when in potential tick habitat.
- d. Remove ticks correctly and report.
- e. Watch for symptoms - see a doctor if you feel unwell.

Did we miss something? Email us at info@ofa.on.ca

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is intended as a guide only and does not constitute expert medical or technical advice. The information and recommendations are current to the best of our knowledge and has been assembled from sources believed to be reliable and to represent the best current opinion on the subject. OFA makes no guarantee to the absolute correctness of any representation contained in this document. OFA assumes no responsibility in that all acceptable safety measures are contained in this document, or that other or additional measures may not be required depending on the circumstances.

For authoritative, localized information regarding risk areas in your region, consult local public health bodies like [Public Health Ontario](#) or the [Government of Canada Tick Information](#).

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Record of Training

Training included an introduction to staying safe in potential tick habitat. Employees received instruction on tick identification, how to prevent tick bites, daily self-checks to detect ticks, proper tick removal methods, and symptoms of Lyme Disease to watch for if bitten.

Date ____ / ____ / ____

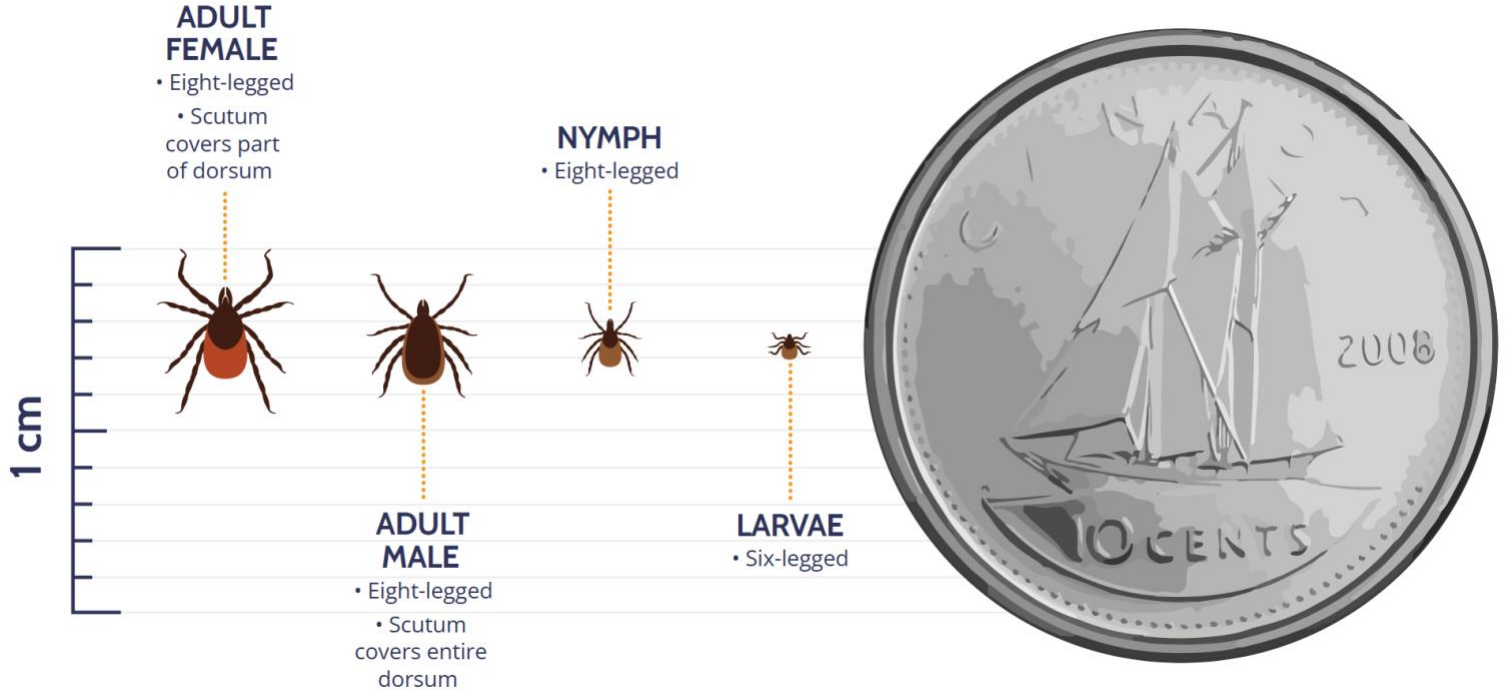
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Blacklegged Tick



Source: Tick Talk Canada
<https://ticktalkcanada.com/tick-facts/>



Blacklegged Tick or Deer Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



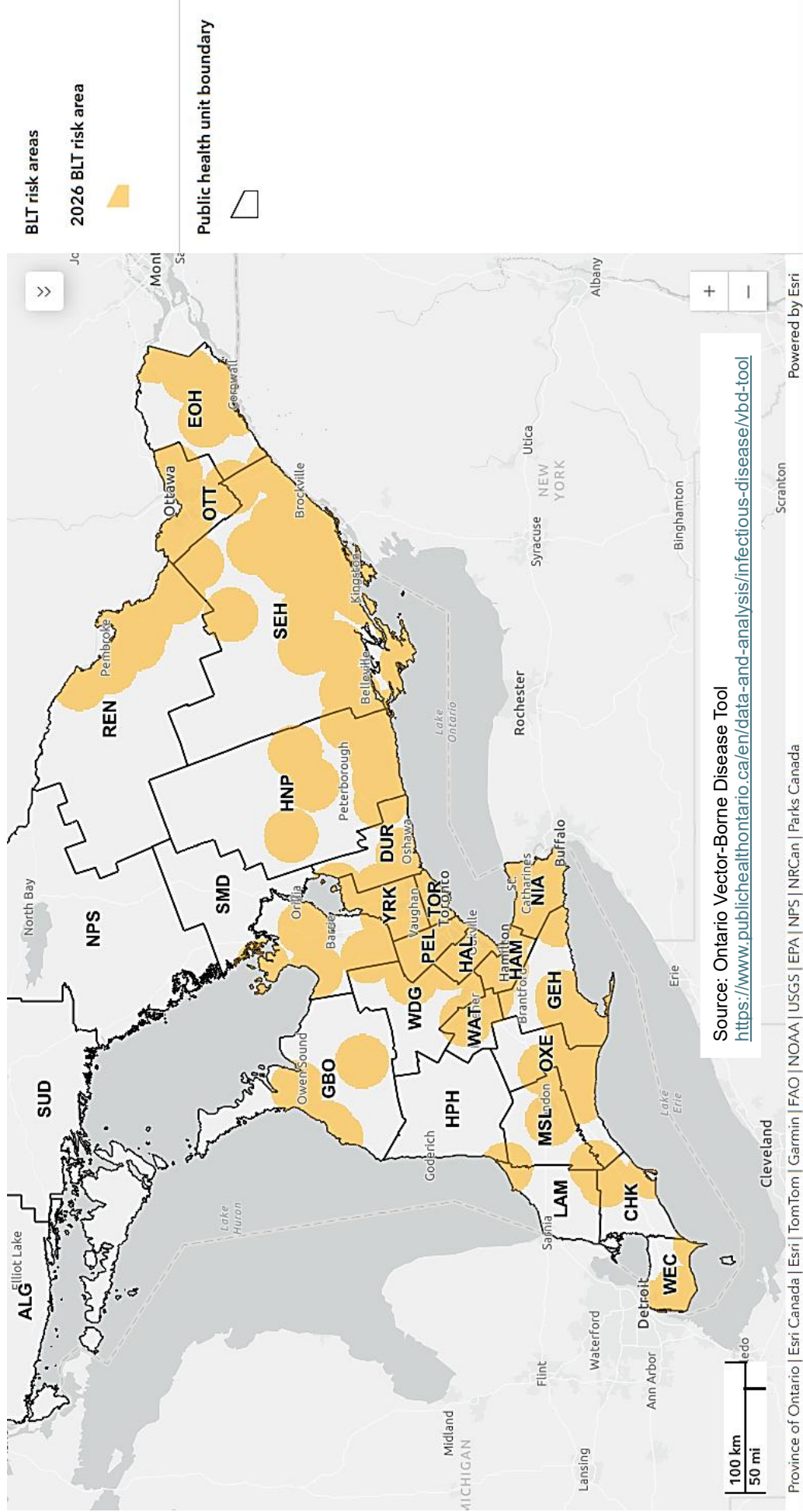
Source: TickEncounter – University of Rhode Island
<https://web.uri.edu/tickencounter/species/blacklegged-tick/>



About these images:

- Note the sizes of different life stages of the Blacklegged Tick.
- The nymph stage is very small, about the size of a poppy seed.
- Both the nymph stage and the larger adult female stage are responsible for transmitting diseases such as Lyme disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis.

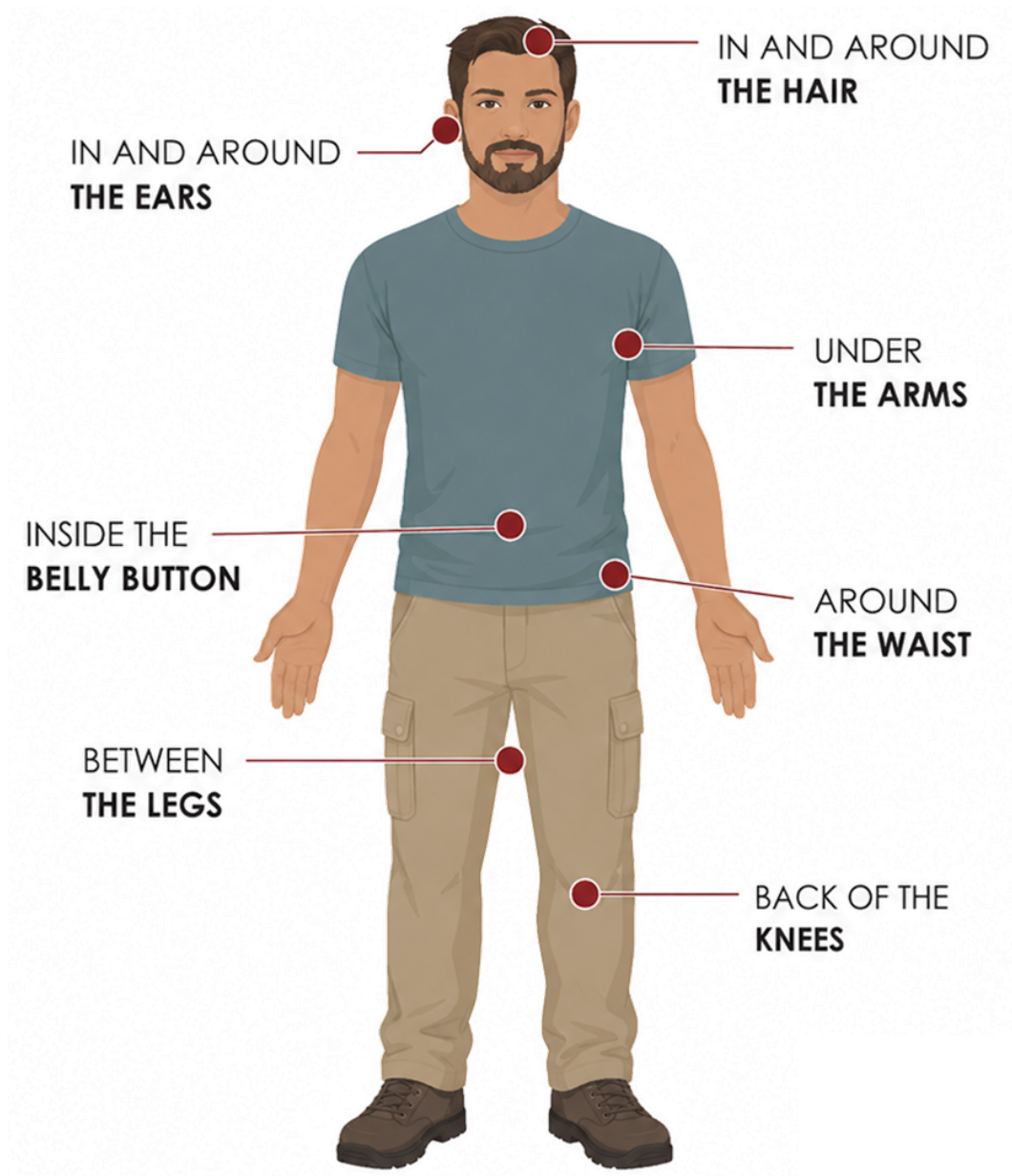
Blacklegged Tick (BLT) Establishment Risk Areas for Southern Ontario - May 2026



Main takeaways from this map:

- Data from Ontario's active tick surveillance system shows that Blacklegged Tick habitat is expanding across Ontario – areas once thought to be safe are now finding Blacklegged Ticks.
- These are the ticks that can carry Lyme Disease and require greater precautions.
- The Ontario Vector-Borne Disease Tool has information on other tick related diseases: Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, and Powassan Virus Disease, and can provide detailed information on the number of cases reported and disease rates by Public Health Units (PHU).
- Areas around Kenora, International Falls, and Thunder Bay are also experiencing increased Blacklegged Tick habitat.

Where to check for ticks

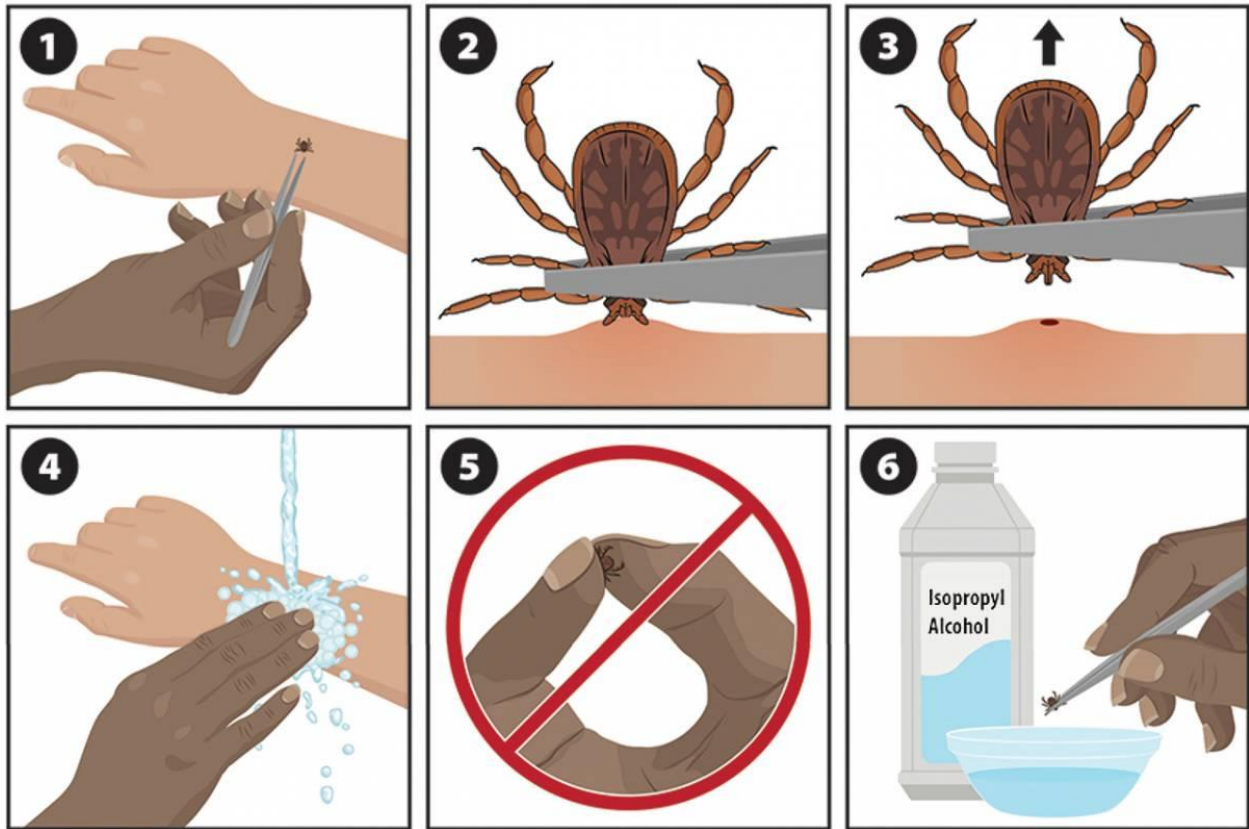


Where Ticks Hide on the Body

Ticks prefer warm and moist areas on the body, after working outdoors, check thoroughly:

- **Hairline and Scalp:** ticks often climb upward.
- **Under the arms:** armpits are a common attachment spot.
- **Groin and Waist:** around the waistband.
- **Behind the knees.**
- **In or around the ears.**
- **Belly button.**
- **Between the toes.**

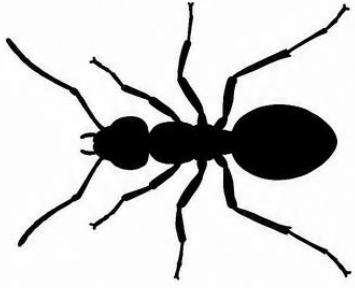
How to properly remove a tick



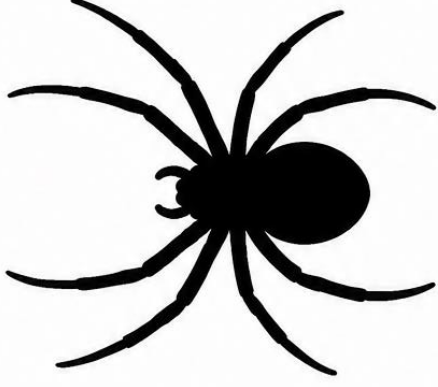
Step-by-Step Process for Tick Removal

1. **Use Tweezers:** use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. **Grip Properly:** aim for the tick's head or mouthparts, not its body, to avoid squeezing fluids into the bite.
3. **Pull Upwards:** pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not jerk or twist the tick, as this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin.
4. **Clean the Area:** after removal, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, or an iodine scrub.
5. **Avoid Finger Removal:** **do not** attempt to remove the tick with your bare fingers or by squeezing it.
6. **Dispose and Disinfect:** dispose of the live tick by putting it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag or some kind of container. Keeping the tick for later identification is important.

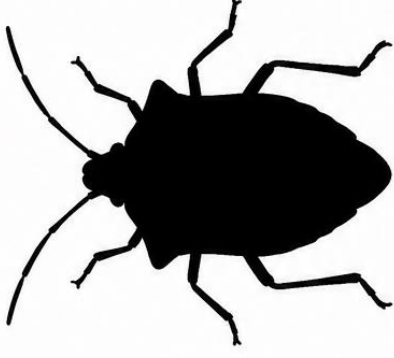
Find the Tick!



(A)



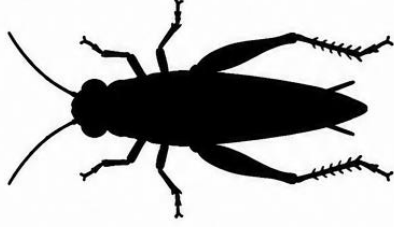
(B)



(C)



(D)



(E)



(F)