What Every School Nurse Needs to Know About Tick Bites

Strategies for Avoiding Tick Bites

- Dress properly—Wear light colored fabrics, long pants tucked into socks, long sleeves, collared shirt.
- Wear an EPA-registered insect repellent like DEET. Generally, the higher the concentration of active ingredient in the product, the longer the protection time. So, more is not 'better', it's 'longer'. Keep in mind, however, that protection times may be shorter for repelling ticks than for mosquitoes.
- Conduct thorough tick checks and shower as soon as possible upon returning inside to remove any unattached ticks. (See Proper Removal Technique on back)
- Washing clothes may not kill ticks, but drying clothing on high will. Some experts suggest putting clothing in the dryer on high for 10-20 minutes as soon as you come into the house after being in tick territory.
- Use permethrin (an insecticide) on clothing…NEVER on bare skin. Follow label instructions.
- Avoid tick habitat – note that most tick bites occur close to home.
- Check family pets for ticks. Use vet-recommended tick products on them. Do not use repellents registered for humans on pets.

What Everyone Needs to Know about Repellents

- DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) is an active ingredient registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in personal insect repellent products formulated for direct application to exposed skin.
- Concentration means the amount of DEET (the active ingredient) in a repellent product.
- Read and follow label directions. Apply evenly to all exposed skin and/or clothing (as directed on the product label).
- Smooth repellent evenly over exposed skin to assure even coverage. Many people spray repellent on their hands and then smooth it on exposed skin. This is the recommended method for applying to very young children.
- Children should not a apply repellent to themselves or others until they are able to read, understand and follow label directions. Repellents can be reapplied if needed.
- After outdoor activity, wash repellent-treated skin with soap and water.
- Repellents are not needed under clothing unless mosquitoes are able to bite through the fabrics. For protection from ticks, spray repellent lightly on shoes, socks and pant legs...and of course on all exposed skin.

Removing Ticks

- Always remove the attached tick as soon as possible.
- Never squeeze ticks or use folklore remedies such as heat or "painting" the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly to prompt it to detach from the skin.
- Instruct students how to remove ticks properly.

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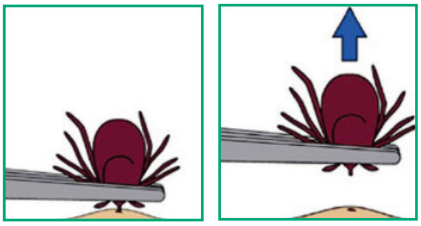
Proper Removal Technique

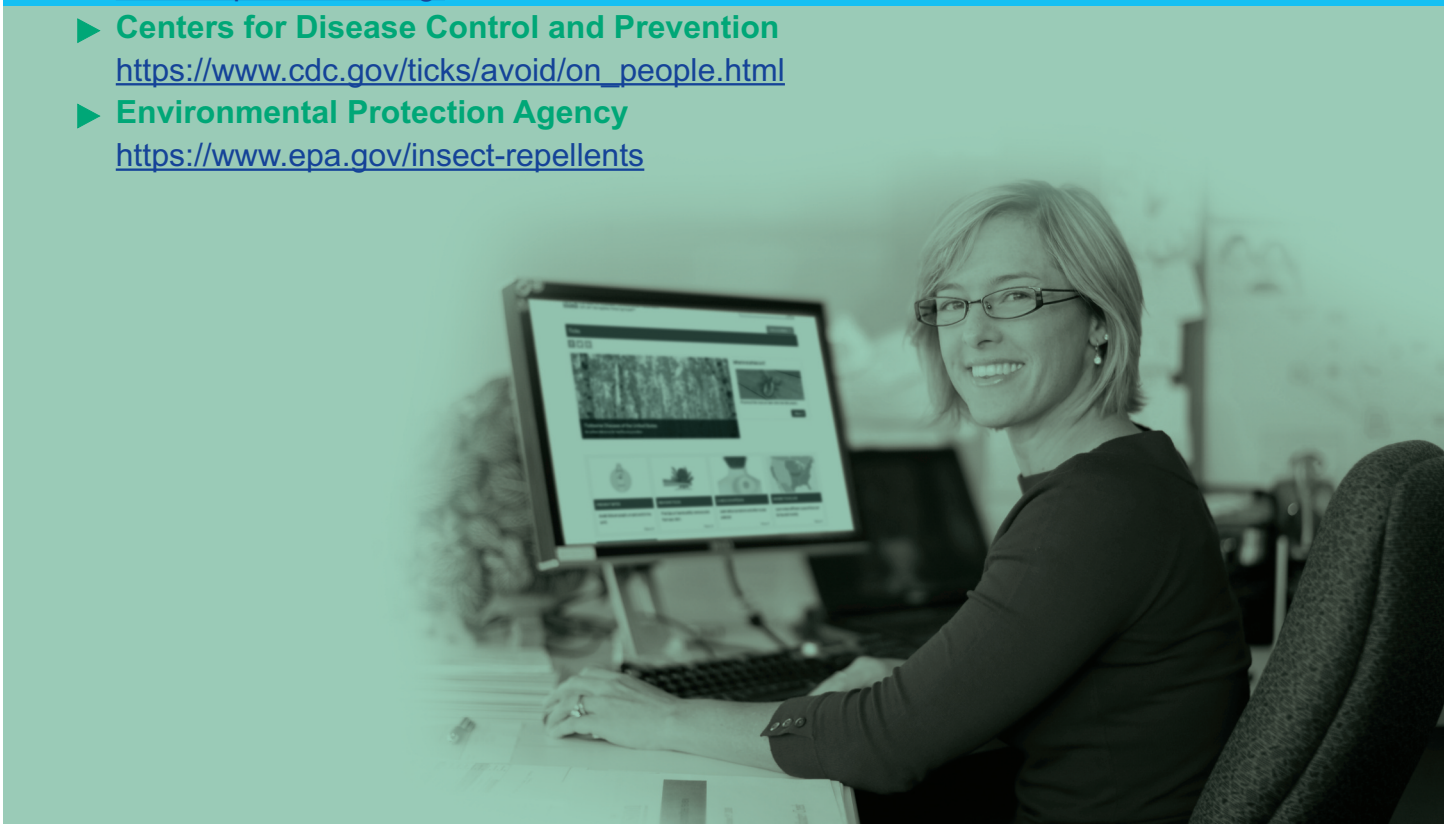


1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick. This can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave 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. Place the tick in a vial filled with alcohol to kill it. Squeezing or mangling the tick body can release infectious fluids. Never put it outside or down the drain.

Graphics and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Protection.

MORE INFORMATION

- **DEET Education Program**
  www.RepellentInfo.org
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
  https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html
- **Environmental Protection Agency**
  https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents



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DEET EDUCATION PROGRAM
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The DEET Education Program operates under the auspices of the Household & Commercial Products Association.

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