



DISEASE PREVENTION

Ticks

Ticks in Washington State

Ticks are small blood-feeding parasites; some can spread diseases to humans.

- Anaplasmosis
- Babesiosis
- Lyme Disease
- Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Tick paralysis
- Tularemia
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Tick illnesses are rare in Washington, but caution is key in tick areas.

Removing a Tick

Remove the tick as soon as possible to reduce chances of getting sick.

Step 1 |

Use fine-tipped tweezers to remove. Avoid touching tick with bare hands.

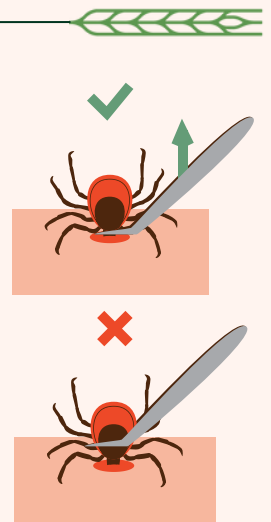
Step 2 |

Grab tick close to skin and pull upward with steady pressure. Don't twist or jerk—this may leave mouth parts behind. If left behind, remove with tweezers. If mouth parts are not easily removed, leave it and let skin heal.

Step 3 |

Disinfect thoroughly after removal.

If you develop a rash, fever, or flu-like symptoms within weeks of a tick bite, see your healthcare provider. Mention the bite details and, if possible, bring the tick for identification.



Submitting a Tick to Determine the Species

If you find a tick on a person or pet, you can send the tick to the WADOH for identification. You will receive an email with the tick species and the diseases it may carry. Identifying the species of tick may help a healthcare provider diagnose tick-borne illnesses.

Place the tick in a crush-proof container, and view the submission instructions using the button or QR code to the right.



Submit a Tick >>



Testing a Tick for Disease



Although submitting ticks for identification can help your healthcare provider diagnose tick-borne illnesses, testing ticks for disease is not recommended for the following reasons:

- Laboratories that conduct tick testing are not required to have the same standards of quality control used by clinical diagnostic laboratories. Test results should not be used for treatment decisions.
- Even if a tick tests positive for illness, it may not have been attached to the body long enough to transmit infection.
- A negative result doesn't mean you do not have a tick-borne illness; another tick may have bitten you.
- Results often come too late to help with early symptoms.

Avoid Tick Bites



Avoid tick areas |

- Including tall grass, brush, leaf litter and woods
- Stay in the center of trails, especially in spring and early summer

Use repellent |

- Apply EPA-registered repellent with DEET, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, picaridin or 2-undecanone. Treat clothes and gear with 0.5% permethrin.

Dress & check for ticks |

- Wear light-colored long sleeves and pants; tuck pants into socks and shirt into pants.
- Check yourself, kids, and pets after being outside – focus on hair, ears, underarms, behind knees, waist, and groin.
- Shower after outdoor activity to wash off ticks.

Make your yard less attractive for ticks |

- Clear leaf litter, brush, woodpiles, and trash.
- Mow grass, trim shrubs, and limit groundcover in play & pet areas.
- Keep play areas away from woods; use mulch or wood chips as foundation.
- Control rodents around the home.

MODIFIED 5.7.2025

