



Delaware County Public Health

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Tick Season

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) reminds Iowans to protect themselves against tick bites. Ticks can carry the organisms that cause Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Ehrlichiosis.

Reducing exposure to ticks is the best defense against these infections.

Steps to reduce your exposure include:

- Do not walk barelegged in tall grass or woods.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and high socks. Tuck pants into socks.
- Wear light-colored clothing so crawling ticks can be seen more easily.
- Stay on trails when walking or hiking, avoiding high grass.
- Use insect repellent with DEET on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. Read and follow label directions for application. [Click here](#) for a DEET Fact Sheet.
- Permethrin is another type of repellent that can be applied to clothing, but DO NOT apply it directly to the skin. Always follow the directions on the repellent label.
- Wash off all repellents after going indoors.
- Conduct “tick checks” daily if spending a lot of time outdoors. This includes for yourself, your children, and your pets. Ticks are most often found on the back of the knee, scalp, groin, back of neck, thigh, arms, underarms, and legs.

If you discover a tick on your body, remove it right away. Folk remedies, such as burning the tick with a match or covering it with petroleum jelly, kerosene, or nail polish are not effective. Remove the tick by:

- Use tweezers
- Grab the tick close to the skin
- Pull straight out
- Once removed, cleanse the area with soap, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide

The most common tick-borne disease is Lyme disease. Not everyone who gets Lyme disease will have the same symptoms. The best and earliest sign of infection is a rash that may appear within a few days to a month, usually at the site of the tick bite. The rash will first look like a small, red bump, then expand until it begins to look like a bull’s eye, with a red center and a red ring surrounding a clear area. It is important to contact your healthcare provider immediately if you develop this type of rash.

For more information on Lyme disease and ticks, visit:

- [Preventing Ticks on Your Pets](#)
- [Prevent Lyme Disease \(CDC\)](#)
- [DEET Fact Sheet \(IDPH\)](#)
- [It’s Open Season on Ticks \(CDC\)](#)
- [Tick Surveillance in Iowa \(Iowa State University\)](#)