



STATEWIDE'S EDGE

Giving public entities the edge on addressing their safety issues

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STATEWIDE INSURANCE FUND LOSS CONTROL FACT SHEET - #2010-05 Tips to Avoid Tick & Mosquito Bites

1. **Use a product with 20% DEET or higher on both skin and clothing.** Carefully apply the repellent by hand to your face, neck, and ears – you don't want DEET in your eyes or mouth! You may need to reapply DEET products after several hours.
2. **Apply permethrin to clothing and boots.** Permethrin products should never be used on skin. It remains effective on clothing through several washings. Permethrin is sold under the names Permanone and Duranon. Ex-Officio sells a line of clothing that is pretreated with permethrin. The treatment lasts through up to 70 washings.
3. **Wear light-colored clothing.** You'll have a better chance of seeing a dark tick crawling on you *before* it makes its way to your skin.
4. **Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants with boots.** Tuck your pant legs into your socks, and keep your shirt tucked into your waistband. In areas where ticks are abundant, you might even want to wrap some duct tape around your ankles, over the top of your socks.
5. **Reduce outdoor activity** at dawn and dusk when mosquitos are most active.
6. **Stay on the trail.** Ticks hang out in high vegetation, waiting for a passing host. When your leg brushes through the vegetation, the tick transfers to your body. Avoid meadows or other high vegetation areas.
7. **Avoid tick-infested places.** In some places, ticks may be too abundant to avoid, even with the best repellents and long pants. If you venture a few feet into a wooded area or field and find your legs covered with ticks, turn around.
8. **Be vigilant – do a daily tick check.** Strip down and search all those places that ticks love to hide: in your hair, under your arms, nape of the neck, between your legs, behind the knees, and even in your belly button. In tick infested areas, check clothing and yourself every 4 - 6 hours.

9. **Put your clothes in the dryer, and tumble them on high heat.** Research shows many ticks can make it through the washing machine, even when you wash in hot water. Most ticks will die during a cycle in the hot, dry air of your clothes dryer, though.

10. **Follow the suggestions for tick removal:**

Step 1: Use fine-tipped tweezers or shield your fingers with a tissue, paper towel or rubber gloves. Grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick; this may cause the mouth parts to break off and remain in the skin. Do not squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick.

Step 2: Using matches, hot nails, petroleum jelly or other methods for tick removal are not recommended.

Step 3: After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash your hands with soap and water.

Step 4: Make a note of the date you removed the tick and save it for identification in case you become ill. This may help your doctor make an accurate diagnosis. Place the tick in a plastic bag and put it in your freezer or drop it in a small container of alcohol.

Step 5: If you have any signs or symptoms of tick-borne disease in the month following a tick bite, seek medical help. Symptoms of Rocky Mountain spotted fever include sudden onset of fever, headache and muscle pain followed by a rash. Symptoms of Lyme disease include a rash that looks like a bull's eye and nonspecific symptoms such as a fever, malaise, fatigue, headache as well as muscle and joint aches.

For additional information, refer to

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dybid/publications/lyme.html>

or

<http://www.aldf.com/brochures.shtml> (they have a sample tick identification card available for review online).