



As we move closer to spring, please keep in mind some tips to help protect you and your family from exposure to tick bites. The deer tick is anxious to be out and about and may become active as soon as it is above freezing.

Prevention of tick bites is important. To be "TICK FREE", we should remember to:

- **DO A TICK CHECK DAILY. CHECK YOURSELF, CHILDREN, and PETS.** Perform a full body search for ticks at the end of each day or first thing in the morning, especially if pets sleep on the bed. Pay special attention to: scalp, hairline, ears, armpits, waistband area, groin and behind the knee. Run your fingers over the skin to feel for tiny bumps that may feel like a scab, which may be a feeding tick.
- Avoid areas where ticks are most abundant, including areas around our homes: wooded areas, tall grass, brush, bushes and leaf litter. Clear dead or rotting vegetation away from your home. Rake fallen leaves.
- If you go into those areas wear protective clothing. Wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks that are crawling. Tuck shirt into pants and pants into socks. Upon returning home, do tick checks, remove clothing, turn inside out, and put them in a clothes dryer on high heat for 20 minutes to kill any ticks clinging to fabric. You can also use a lint roller (tape) to capture any clinging ticks.
- Ticks should be removed as soon as possible. If ticks are removed within 24 hours of attaching, the risk of getting Lyme disease is minimal.

If a tick is found attached to the skin, care should be taken with removal. Ticks attach to the skin by their mouthpiece and can feed for days. Ticks should never be removed with fingers, chemicals, petroleum jelly, matches or lighters. Chemicals, heat, or squeezing the body of the tick can force the bacteria that cause Lyme disease into the site. Ticks should **only** be removed with fine pointed tweezers or forceps, pulling upward, with a steady, gentle force. If the mouthpiece breaks off just remove it as you would a splinter. Apply antiseptic to the site after tick removal and then **WASH YOUR HANDS**. Contact your healthcare provider.

If you would like more information on Lyme disease prevention, call the Orange County Department of Health at 845-360-6680.