

Tick Season

The 2018 tick season is here, and because of the mild winter, scientists are predicting a bad one. Ticks are most active during late Spring, early Summer, and mid-Fall. An increase in the number of ticks means an increase in tick-borne diseases such as Lyme as well as the emergence of new diseases like Powassan, a potentially fatal tick-borne virus found primarily in the Northeast and the Great Lakes region.

Over 30 species of tick can be found in Colorado. The most common ticks are the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), Rocky Mountain wood tick (*Dermator andersoni*), and the Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*). These ticks can carry diseases harmful to humans.

Ticks that carry Lyme disease are not native to Colorado, and no confirmed cases of the disease have originated here; however, residents who travel out of state are at risk and should be aware of the symptoms of this potentially severe neurological disease.

How do I Avoid Ticks?

The best way to avoid a tick-borne disease is to avoid ticks. As this is not always possible, the Center for Disease Control recommends the following:

- Use a tick repellent that contains 20% or more of DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing.
- Treat clothing, gear, boots, socks, and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Do not apply to skin.
- Perform a tick check after being in wooded, bushy, or grassy areas.

What if I Find a Tick on Me?

If you find a tick on you, follow the steps below. You will need a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, a sealed plastic bag/container, and disinfectant. Visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html for more information.

1. First, place the tweezers as close to the tick's head as possible.
2. Then gently squeeze with the tweezers as you pull upward with steady, even pressure.
3. Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed container for later identification, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down a toilet.

You may also consider taking a picture of the tick with your smart phone. This can help with tick identification and create a timestamp of when you were bitten.

Tick Bite Symptoms

Symptoms can vary, but often include fever and a rash. Most symptoms appear within a few days to weeks of being bitten; however, some people do not develop any symptoms. If you develop a rash or fever after being bitten, seek treatment immediately and tell your doctor about the bite.

What This Means for Counties

If you will be spending time outdoors this summer be sure to take proper precautions and watch out for tick bite symptoms. For more information, contact CTSI loss prevention at (303) 861 0507.

