



Tick Awareness: *Taking FOSS Outdoors*

During your child's science instruction time, we occasionally go to the schoolyard for science. We strongly recommend that parents do tick checks every night after children are outside. Most schoolyards do not have ticks because the grass is cut very short, and there are no wooded areas; however, on occasion the class may go to wilder nature areas. Therefore, because of the concerns about tick-carried illnesses, we recommend that teachers have students do a quick clothing scan and search for ticks on arms, backs, and legs following outdoor exploration (especially when in the woods or looking through leaf litter).

Where do ticks live and what do they look like?

Ticks tend to live in forests, in dense moist leaf litter, and in tall grasses. They can be transported on animals such as squirrels, foxes, and deer, as well as waiting on plants to grab onto humans as they pass by. Ticks are tiny, some as small as a poppy seed, and although some people think they are kind of icky, most ticks are harmless. Some, like the blacklegged (deer) tick or the American dog tick, may spread tickborne diseases. Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever can be dangerous, but both are treatable and even preventable if precautions are taken.

What precautions can you take to avoid ticks?

Here are some prevention methods that work well.

- Wear light colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants. This will make it easier to scan clothing and see any ticks before going inside.
- Tuck pant legs into long socks.
- Stay on trails.
- Do quick buddy tick checks: look on the legs, back, and arms of a partner.
- Conduct a thorough full-body tick check nightly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that parents check children “under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.”

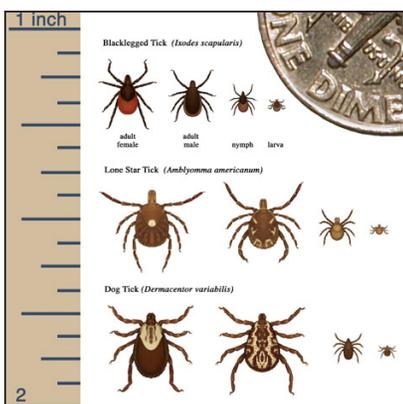


Image courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What are some common tickborne symptoms?

Common tickborne disease symptoms include rashes or bulls-eye like markings, flu-like symptoms, aches, and joint pain. See your pediatrician immediately if symptoms appear. Learn more about tickborne disease symptoms at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/symptoms.html>

To remove ticks use long needle-nose tweezers. See the video from the TickEncounter resources center or read the CDC information on their website:

http://www.tickencounter.org/prevention/how_to_remove_a_tick_video

http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

For more information about ticks visit the CDC's Website:

http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html

To learn about what types of ticks can be found in your area:
http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/geographic_distribution.html#blacklegged

