

## Preventing ticks on your pets

Dogs are very susceptible to tick bites and tickborne diseases. Vaccines are not available for all the tickborne diseases that dogs can get, and they don't keep the dogs from bringing ticks into your home. For these reasons, it's important to use a tick preventive product on your dog.

Tick bites on dogs may be hard to detect. Signs of tickborne disease may not appear for 7-21 days or longer after a tick bite, so watch your dog closely for changes in behavior or appetite if you suspect that your pet has been bitten by a tick.

To reduce the chances that a tick will transmit disease to you or your pets:

- Check your pets for ticks daily, especially after they spend time outdoors.
- If you find a tick on your dog, remove it right away.
- Ask your veterinarian to conduct a tick check at each exam.
- Talk to your veterinarian about tickborne diseases in your area.
- Reduce tick habitat in your yard.
- Talk with your veterinarian about using tick preventives on your pet.

**Note: Cats are extremely sensitive to a variety of chemicals. Do not apply any insect acaricides or repellents to your cats without first consulting your veterinarian!**

### Kill Ticks on Dogs

A pesticide product that kills ticks is known as an acaricide. Acaricides that can be used on dogs include dusts, impregnated collars, sprays, or topical treatments. Some acaricides kill the tick on contact. Others may be absorbed into the bloodstream of a dog and kill ticks that attach and feed.

Pros:

- Helps to reduce the number of ticks in the environment
- Prevents tickborne disease

Cons:

- Tick bites can cause a painful wound and may become infected.
- When bitten, a dog may become infected with a number of diseases. This depends on the type of tick, which diseases it is carrying (if any), and how quickly a product kills the feeding tick.

Examples of topically applied products (active ingredients):

- Fipronil
- Pyrethroids (permethrin, etc.)
- Amitraz

### Repel Ticks on Dogs

A repellent product may prevent the tick from coming into contact with an animal at all or have anti-feeding effects once the tick comes into contact with the chemical, thus preventing a bite.

Pros:

- Prevents bite wounds and possible resulting infections
- Prevents tickborne disease

Cons:

- Will not reduce the number of ticks in the environment (doesn't kill ticks)

Examples of topically applied products (active ingredients):

- Pyrethroids (permethrin, etc.)

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## Preventing tick bites

While it is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.

### Avoid Direct Contact with Ticks

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.

### Repel Ticks on Skin and Clothing

- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
  - Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may be protective longer.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an [online tool to help you select the repellent](http://cfpub.epa.gov/opprpref/insect/) (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/opprpref/insect/>) that is best for you and your family.

### Find and Remove Ticks from Your Body

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks 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.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day packs.
- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.
  - If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.
  - If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks effectively. If the clothes cannot be washed in hot water, tumble dry on low heat for 90 minutes or high heat for 60 minutes. The clothes should be warm and completely dry.

#### Treat your clothing with permethrin



#### Read instructions



#### Apply in ventilated area



#### Hang to dry

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Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/>)

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/>)

Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbd/index.html>)