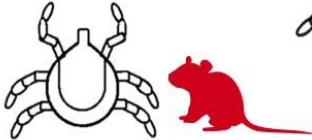


Tic Toc it's Tick Time!

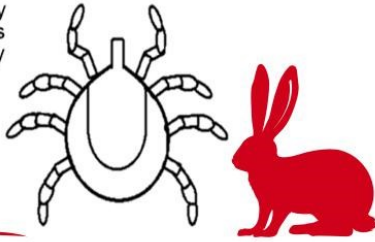
Tick season begins in the spring, usually during May and June. Get to know these diminutive Draculas and learn how to prevent exposure!

After hatching from eggs, ticks go through 3 stages of development; larva, nymph, and adult. To move from one stage to the next they must take a blood meal from an animal. After feeding they fall to the ground and molt to the next stage.

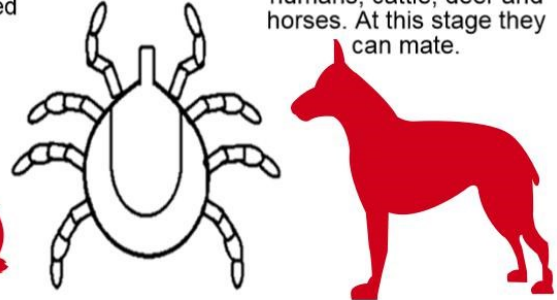
Larval ticks are tiny and only have six legs. At this stage they usually feed on small mammals like mice. When on people may be called seed ticks.



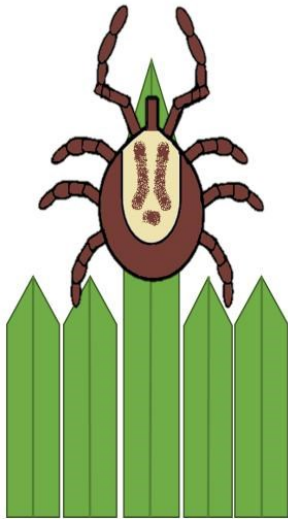
Nymphal ticks have eight legs and feed on medium sized mammals like rabbits.



Adult ticks feed on dogs, humans, cattle, deer and horses. At this stage they can mate.



- Contrary to popular belief, ticks do not live in the tops of trees and fall down onto our heads. Ticks are much more likely to be found in areas of tall grass next to paths, trails, fences, or roadways where their hosts are more likely to be.



- Ticks wait at the end of a blade of grass with their front arms out. This behavior is called "questing". When an animal walks by, the tick grabs hold and then searches the body for a spot where they can easily feed. On humans this includes the waist, the groin, knee and arm pits, and the scalp. Once they finish eating they find a mate and females will go and lay a large pile of eggs.

Ticks feed by inserting a "hypostome", which is sort of a spiky tongue, into the skin and drawing up blood. The barbs on the tongue and a natural cement make them difficult to remove. Once they find a good spot they can feed for days on their host.

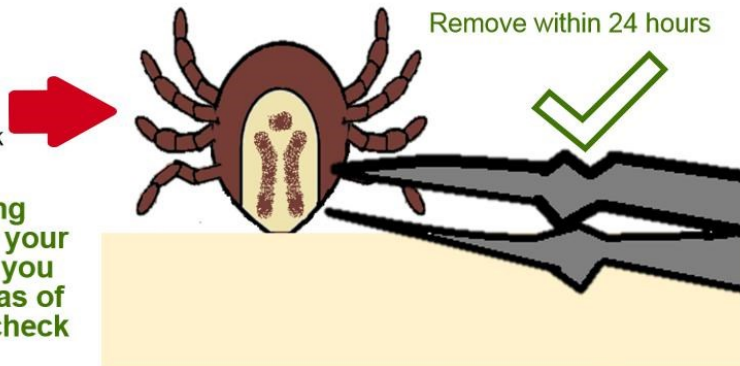


Tick removal

Ticks should be removed as soon as they are found on you. If they have already begun feeding DO NOT try to remove them with alcohol, essential oils, or open flames. Using these methods may cause the tick to "vomit" into you, increasing the chances of disease transmission.

DO remove a tick with a pair of tweezers. Get as close to the skin as possible, grip the tick and firmly but steadily pull up. Do not wiggle the tick or pieces of it may break off inside of you, leading to infection

Prevent ticks on you by wearing repellents such as permethrin on your clothes or DEET on your skin. If you hike, bike, mow, or walk near areas of tall grass, always perform a tick check afterwards.



Sources: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/NebraskaTicks345.shtml>
http://tickencounter.org/tick_identification
<https://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/insects/find/ticks-and-their-control/>

N EXTENSION
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