

AVOIDING TICK BITES

A guide for people with alpha-gal syndrome (AGS)



People with AGS need to be extra careful to avoid tick bites because new bites can make your AGS worse.

LONE STAR TICKS (*AMBLYOMMA AMERICANUM*)

In the U.S., most AGS cases are caused by lone star tick bites. Lone star ticks are most common in late spring through early fall, but they can be active year-round any time temperatures are above freezing.

Unlike some other tick species, lone star ticks don't always sit and wait. They hunt you. If you are stationary (e.g. standing, sitting, gardening, picnicking), they will detect your odor and rapidly crawl several yards to find you. Note that ticks cannot jump or fly.

All stages of lone star ticks can cause AGS. Lone star tick larvae are very tiny and are often confused with chiggers. In summer through early fall, you may encounter swarms of hundreds of larvae.



Source: Centers for Disease Control



BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

TREAT

The best way to avoid tick bites is to wear permethrin-treated shoes, socks, pants, shirts, and gear. You can buy pre-treated clothes, treat them yourself, or get them treated commercially by Insect Shield. Commercial permethrin treatment is more effective than home spraying. *Always read the labels of permethrin products and follow the instructions carefully. Consult a veterinarian if you own cats.*



WEAR

- Long socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Tick gaiters, such as LymeEZ.
- Light-colored clothes help you see ticks more easily.

TUCK

- Tuck your shirt into your pants.
- Tuck your pant legs into long socks.



TAPE

Wrap the top of your boots with double-sided carpet tape to trap ticks trying to crawl up your legs.

Boot wrapped in double-sided carpet tape to trap ticks



SPRAY

This EPA tool can help you find a repellent that works for you. Do not rely exclusively on repellents like Deet and picaridin. They are not always effective against lone star ticks. Permethrin is the only product that repels AND kills ticks, but it should NOT be used on exposed skin.



WHILE OUT AND ABOUT

WATCH WHERE YOU WALK AND SIT

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

KEEP MOVING

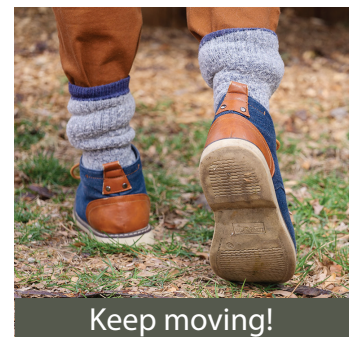
- If you stay still for too long, lone star ticks will detect your odor and come find you.
- Don't sit in tick-infested areas or on stone walls.

CHECK FOR TICKS FREQUENTLY

- While outdoors, check yourself and your children for ticks frequently.

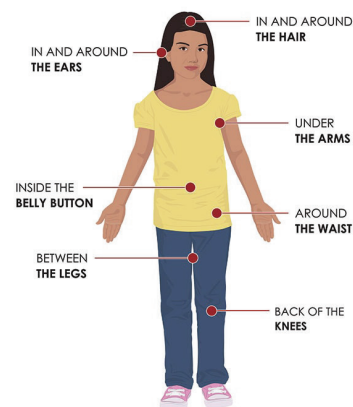
USE A LINT ROLLER

- Run a lint roller over your clothes to pick up small ticks you don't see.
- At the end of your walk, before you enter your car or house, run the lint roller over all of your clothes.



WHEN YOU GET HOME

- Do a full-body tick check and check your clothes, pets, and gear for ticks.
- Remove any ticks you find immediately, using proper technique (see Tick Bot).
- Get a shower as soon as possible to wash off unattached ticks. While showering, feel for any ticks you may have missed. Consider keeping a hand-held mirror in your shower to check places you can't easily see.
- Tumble your clothes in a clothes dryer on high for at least one hour before washing them to kill lone star ticks. Heat and desiccation (drying out) kill ticks, not water.



Source: Centers for Disease Control

IF A TICK BITES YOU



If you find a tick attached to you, the CDC's Tick Bot can help you learn how to properly remove it and figure out the next steps.

TICK-BORNE DISEASES



Remember, ticks don't just cause AGS. Watch for symptoms of other tick-borne diseases!

TICK ID



Different tick species transmit different disease-causing pathogens (germs). Also, some cause alpha-gal syndrome, and some don't. ID your ticks!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



See Alpha-gal Information (AGI) for more resources on ticks and AGS, including more tips for avoiding tick bites, identifying ticks, what to do if you are bitten by a tick, protecting pets, reducing ticks in your yard, and more.



Current tick
activity
in your area



Lone star tick
brochure



Pets and ticks



Permethrin
facts



Ticks and your
yard