

## What to Know About Ticks



### What are ticks?

Ticks are parasites that feed on the blood of animals and occasionally humans. There are about 30 species of ticks found in Colorado. The most common are the Rocky Mountain Wood tick and the American Dog tick.

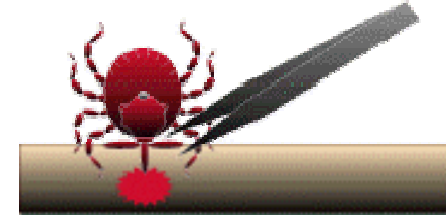
**Tick season starts in late spring and usually subsides by mid-July.**

### Tick Prevention

- Avoid areas where ticks are prominent.
- Wear light colored clothing so the dark ticks are easier to see.
- Check for ticks regularly – it usually takes several hours for a tick to start feeding. With regular checks, there is plenty of time to remove them.
- Wear repellent. DEET is the most effective repellent. Ticks hone in on carbon dioxide that is expelled from the body. DEET disrupts the detection of carbon dioxide. For more information on DEET see: [http://www.deet.com/deet\\_fact\\_sheet.htm](http://www.deet.com/deet_fact_sheet.htm)

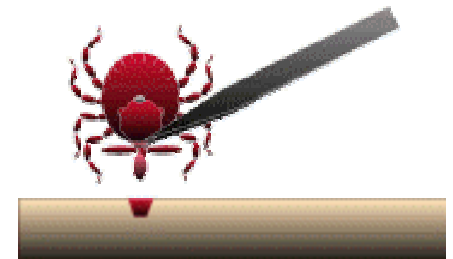


### Tick Removal



Ticks secrete a glue-like substance that helps them hold onto the skin. They also have mouths that are covered in barbs that attach to skin.

1. Use tweezers if possible, and grab the ticks head. Get as close to the skin as possible. If tweezers are not available, use fingers and cover with tissue paper or wear gloves.
2. Using steady pressure, firmly pull the tick straight out. **DO NOT TWIST OR CRUSH TICK.**
3. Wash and disinfect the bite and your hands.



# Tick-Borne Diseases

## Colorado Tick Fever (CTF)

CTF is the most common tick-borne disease in Colorado. It is caused by a virus and is transmitted to humans through the bite of a Rocky Mountain Wood tick. In studies it has been shown that the infected tick is usually attached for several hours before enough of the virus is transmitted.

CTF is not life threatening. There is currently no treatment.

### Symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body Aches



Illness should occur within 4-5 days after infection followed by a recovery and then a relapse for several more days.

Complete recovery may take 2-3 weeks.

\*Once infected, your body is immune.

## Other Tick-Borne Diseases

### Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

This is a bacterial infection can be life threatening if untreated. Symptoms are similar to CTF and include aching, rash on body starting with arms and legs, then spreading to other parts of the body, and a very high fever.

Occurrence of this disease is rare.

### Lyme Disease

This bacterial infection results in symptoms such as a ring-like rash around bite, flu-like symptoms, body and headaches. Serious symptoms vary and can escalate to numbness, fatigue, partial paralysis, arthritis, effects on heart and nervous system.

This is the most common tick-borne disease in the U.S. but is rarely seen in the mountains. Wood ticks do not carry Lyme Disease.

### Tularemia

This bacterial infection causes sudden high fevers and sometimes swollen lymph nodes.

Occurrence of this disease is rare in humans but common among wild animals.



### Relapsing Fever

Relapsing fever is transmitted by a soft tick. Symptoms include a cycle of fevers.

The occurrence of this disease is very rare.

### Tick Paralysis

A chemical substance excreted by the salivary glands of certain ticks can attack the nervous system causing the sudden onset of paralysis. Symptoms include numbness of limbs, difficulty breathing, and difficulty walking. The removal of the tick will reverse the condition.

The occurrence of tick paralysis is rare.