

Take Care to Avoid Ticks!

Whenever we're out looking for mushrooms, we're in tick territory. While awareness of Lyme Disease has grown, it's important to be aware that Lyme is *just one* of the 16+ diseases one can contract from a tick bite. Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis, and Powassan Disease have also shown up in the Northeast, in addition to Lyme Disease, and it's possible to be exposed to more than one of these diseases with a single bite of an infected tick.



Some strategies used by veteran BMC foragers:

Susan Goldhor, President of the Boston Mycological Club, says ***“The safest and simplest way to protect against ticks is by wearing one of the brands of permethrin-impregnated clothing.”*** Having bought herself a complete set of such clothing (socks, pants, shirt, bandana, cap) more than five years ago, after being attacked by ticks, black flies and mosquitos all on one day, she hasn't had a tick since, even though she is regularly in “tick territory.” The fact that this clothing protects against the other biting species is a bonus.

Dr. Thomas Mather, Director of URI's TickEncounter Resource Center, also recommends permethrin-impregnated clothing. The Center's website at <http://tickencounter.org/> is THE authoritative source of excellent, up-to-date medical information about ticks. You may want to bookmark their site.

Marsha Browne swears by a mixture of rose geranium essential oil mixed with coconut oil in a 1-10 drop ratio. She keeps the mixture in a squeeze bottle and applies it to all exposed skin before going on walks.

Tyler Akabane has a friend who customizes his pants, creating a flap half-way up the leg, like an upside-down cuff; the ticks are stopped in the flap of fabric.

Whatever your strategy – be sure to use it *every time* you go out to look for mushrooms!

How to Avoid Tick Bites

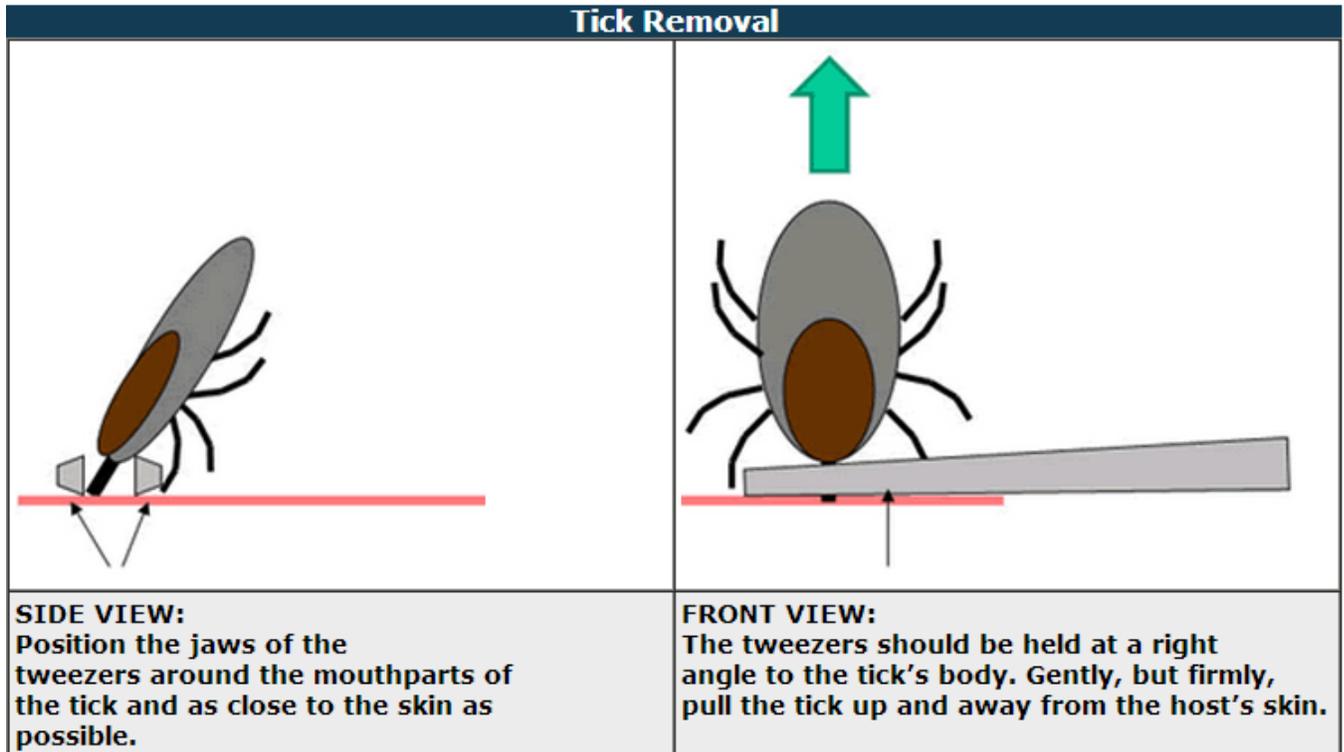
- Avoiding tick habitats is the best defense – but that’s not possible if you want to look for mushrooms.
- Minimize the amount of exposed skin by wearing socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck the pants legs into the sock so ticks cannot crawl up inside the pants (Ticks start low, and crawl up). Wear light-colored pants, to make seeing any ticks easier.
- Apply repellents to skin and clothing, or invest in Permethrin-treated clothing. Follow instructions on product label if you do it yourself. (Products that contain DEET can be applied directly to the skin. Permethrin products can be applied to clothing and boots, not on the skin. This can actually kill ticks that come in contact with the treated clothing. Commercially treated clothing is said to keep its power for up to 70 washes, but should probably be washed separately.)
- A shower soon after coming indoors can help wash away unattached ticks.
- During tick season, conduct daily tick checks. See <http://tickencounter.org/> for diagram of body parts usually chosen by ticks. And remember, nymphal stage deer ticks are as big as the period at the end of this sentence.
- Keep a pair of pointy tweezers and a magnifying glass in your kit for when you do find an attached tick. (See below for comparison of regular tweezers and pointy tweezers.)



If You Find an Embedded Tick

Remove the tick using tweezers with very pointy tips. (Proper technique illustrated below.) Depending on the stage, a deer tick can be very small or tiny; you need pointy tweezers to properly grab the tick. And save the tick in a plastic bag. You might want to have it tested for disease. You can even take a photo of the tick and send it in to TickSpotters for advice on how to proceed. To find out about TickSpotters, and how to send a tick into a lab for testing, click here: http://tickcounter.org/tick_testing

Proper tick removal:



Using pointy tip tweezers, position tip as close to skin as you can get. Gently exert upward pull. Don't worry if the head of the tick stays embedded. Save the tick!

Don't flush it or crush it – save it in a zip-lock plastic bag. Having it tested for disease presently costs \$50. For complete information on having a tick tested, click here <https://www.tickreport.com/>