Stop Ticks in Their Tracks

Warmer weather brings out the outdoor enthusiast in nearly all of us. Yet, working or playing in the outdoors increases your chances of unwillingly providing a meal to a tick — or worse. Ticks can infect you with Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, or other diseases.

Ticks live in warm and humid environments, usually in or near areas with shrubs and tall grasses, in woodlands, or near a body of water. To protect yourself from tick bites:

- **Spray all exposed skin with DEET** and your clothing with permethrin (both are chemicals that kill ticks on contact) or another tick repellant before going hiking. Ticks are most active April through October.
- **Wear light-colored clothing** to make it easier to spot ticks before they crawl onto your skin.
- **If you’re heading into a tick zone, minimize your exposed skin.** Wear a hat, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants with the cuffs tucked into shoes or socks. For extra protection, you can tape the area where pants and socks meet so ticks cannot crawl under your clothing.
- **Wear high boots.**
- **Walk in the center of trails** to avoid overhanging grasses and brush.
- **Check yourself and your pets frequently during outdoor activities** — even when you’re in your own backyard. After being outside, remove your clothing, and wash and dry it at a high temperature. Inspect your body (or have someone else inspect it) carefully. If there is an attached tick, remove it with tweezers, grasping the tick as close to the skin as possible and pulling straight back with a slow, steady force. Put the tick in a sealable baggie or jar and store it in the freezer for a few weeks in case you develop a rash, fever, or other flu-like symptoms. If you do, see your doctor — and be sure to bring your tick along to help your doctor make a diagnosis.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011.

Quite a few common diseases, such as heart disease, run in families. Some rare ones do, too, including hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia. Tracing the diseases that run in your family can help your physician predict the diseases to which you might be at risk — and take action to keep you and your family healthy.

But if a family member has a particular disease, it does not mean that you’ll develop the disease too. Most human diseases result from the interaction of heredity (things you can’t change) with environmental factors and lifestyle choices (things you can change).

A useful family health history shows 3 generations of your first-degree blood relatives (you and your siblings, parents, and grandparents) and second-degree blood relatives (aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and first cousins). For each relative, try to identify:

- Date of birth and gender
- Any birth defects (e.g., cleft lip and heart defects)
- Learning problems or disabilities
- Vision or hearing loss at a young age
- Race/Ethnicity (e.g., Ashkenazi Jewish, African)
- Medical conditions (e.g., allergies, fibroid tumors, pregnancy loss, skin tags*)
- Disease conditions and age at first diagnosis (e.g., high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, diabetes, alcoholism, asthma, mental illness)
- Weight and height (If you don’t know, just note if your relative was overweight or obese.)
- Health behaviors (e.g., smoking, physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, alcohol use, aspirin use)
- Environmental factors (e.g., sedentary job, regularly exposed to secondhand smoke)
- For deceased family members, their age and cause of death

Very few people have detailed and precise information about their entire family health histories. But any information can help. Vacations, holidays, and family reunions are great times to collect this information. If you are adopted, you might be able to gather information from your adoptive parents or from adoption agency records.


*Skin tags are more common in individuals with impaired carbohydrate metabolism and diabetes, and can also occur in a number of genetic conditions.
Q: Why do I hear ringing in my ears? And is there any way to make it stop?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-tinnitus.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: paulaw@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

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One out of every 3 women and 1 out of every 2 men will develop cancer sometime in their lifetime. While most cancers can be treated, it is still a very serious condition and remains the leading cause of death worldwide. (In the United States, cancer is the number-two cause.) The good news is that most cancers can be prevented by making positive lifestyle changes. The World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research compiled data from a large number of studies on diet and cancer risk. They discovered that many common cancers – including breast, colon, stomach, esophageal, and lung cancers – are linked to the foods we eat and other lifestyle factors. To lower your risk:

- **Eat at least 5 servings of fresh fruits and non-starchy vegetables daily.** Harvard University recommends at least 9 servings daily.
- **Contact your local waste management company to find out how to properly dispose of hazardous materials.**
- **Be sure that materials you decide to keep are stored in a well-ventilated area and are safely out of reach of children – up high or in a locked cabinet.**
- **Avoid or minimize your exposure to:**
  - Corrosive or strongly irritating substances (e.g., oven cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners)
  - Substances classified as known or likely human carcinogens or reproductive toxicants (e.g., some carpet cleaners and laundry detergents)
  - Ozone-depleting compounds (e.g., certain aerosol sprays and dry cleaning chemicals)
- **Limit your use of disinfectants to bathroom fixtures, doorknobs, and other high-touch surfaces. Cleaning walls and floors generally doesn’t require the use of disinfectants.**

Today, products that are safer for humans and for the environment are readily available. Look for products that are nontoxic and hypoallergenic. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends using products made from renewable resources (e.g., bio-based solvents from citrus, seed, vegetable, and pine oils) and also those designed for use in cold water to help conserve energy.

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2011.*

**Read An A to Z Resource Guide of Safe Alternatives to Household Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies. tinyurl.com/3drhfwr**

- **Limit your use of disinfectants to bathroom fixtures, doorknobs, and other high-touch surfaces. Cleaning walls and floors generally doesn’t require the use of disinfectants.**

**Health Challenge:** “Assemble a First-Aid Kit & Complete a Safety Course” available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-firstaid.pdf. Be prepared for accidents and emergencies. This month, assemble a first-aid kit and become certified in first aid or CPR.

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Q. When I sit quietly, I notice a ringing in my ears. Is there any way to make it stop?

A. What you’ve described is tinnitus (pronounced ti-NIGHT-us, or TIN-i-tus) – any internal sound you hear that has no outside source. Most people describe their tinnitus as a ringing sound. Others hear roaring, hissing, screeching, buzzing, clicking, pulsing, chirping, or multiple sounds combined.

Tinnitus is a symptom of something that has gone wrong somewhere in the body. If you have constant tinnitus, see your doctor to rule out a medical cause. Some antibiotics, antidepressants, chemotherapy drugs, and even aspirin (in very high doses) can damage your ears. Tinnitus is a potential side effect of almost 200 prescription and over-the-counter drugs – taken singly or in combination. Other causes of tinnitus include impacted ear wax, a thyroid disorder, an ear infection, and in rare cases a benign tumor on the auditory nerve. Hearing loss might also be the cause. It’s best to see a health practitioner who specializes in tinnitus.

The most common known cause of tinnitus (and hearing loss) is very loud noise exposure – either a one-time blast of sound or repeated exposure to loud noise. You might have noticed that your ears ring loudly after you use power tools or come home from a concert.

Sound is measured in units called decibels. Decibel levels begin at zero, which is the weakest sound our ears can hear. For every increase of 10 decibels, a sound is 10 times more intense.

A person who is exposed to 85 decibels or higher for a prolonged period of time is at real risk for hearing loss and tinnitus. Regular exposure to sound over 100 decibels, such as listening to MP3/iPod® music, can result in lifelong hearing damage.

A noise is too loud when:

● You have to raise your voice to be heard by someone nearby.
● It hurts your ears.
● You develop a buzzing or ringing sound in your ears, even temporarily.
● You don’t hear as well as you normally do until several hours after you get away from the noise.

When powerful sound waves damage your inner ear “hair cells,” those damaged cells send disrupted signals to the part of the brain responsible for hearing. Eventually, the brain starts to generate the signal of tinnitus all by itself. Sometimes hearing will improve and tinnitus will quiet down after a few days. But not always.

If you are around noises at this level, take protective action:

● Block the noise with earplugs or ear muffs, or both. If you are a skeet-shooter or a jet-ski enthusiast, for example, wear extra-heavy-duty hearing protection.
● Turn down the sound.
● Avoid the noise anyway you can.

Whether or not you have ringing in your ears, you should protect your hearing. It can keep your tinnitus from getting louder.

To find out more about protecting your ears, visit the Noisy Planet Web site at www.noisyplanet.nidcd.nih.gov and the American Tinnitus Association website at www.ata.org.

### How Loud Is Too Loud?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Decibels (dB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal breathing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticking watch, Rustling leaves</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet whisper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrigerator hum, Twittering birds</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet office</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal conversation, Washing machine</td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum cleaner, Alarm clock (2 feet away)</td>
<td>70-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>City traffic</td>
<td>80-90 maximum weekly limit 40 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawnmower, Subway train, MP3/iPod® at ½ volume</td>
<td>90-100 only safe for 15 minutes at a time without ear protection; maximum weekly limit 5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobile; Chain saw; Hair dryer; MP3/iPod® at ½ volume</td>
<td>100-110 maximum weekly limit 1.25 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screaming child; Blaring stereo</td>
<td>110 maximum weekly limit 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunderclap, fireworks (peak)</td>
<td>120 use extra-heavy-duty ear protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock concert</td>
<td>120-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackhammer, jet plane (100 feet away)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
Prepare for Medical Emergencies

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Ready or not…” and “Know what to do.”
2. To complete the Challenge, you must assemble at least one first-aid kit for home, work, or play by the end of the month. In addition, you should complete a course either in first aid or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
3. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Ready or not…

You take precautions to keep you, your friends, and family safe. That’s good! But sometimes – even with safety measures – people become injured. It’s best to be prepared with training and a kit stocked with first-aid supplies.

Keep a first-aid kit at home that is stocked with enough supplies to take care of several first-aid situations. Also, carry a small kit with you when you drive, bike, or ride public transit. That way you’ll have one at work or school or whenever you need it. It’s a good idea to stash one in your camping, backpacking, and boating supplies too.

The Red Cross recommends that all first-aid kits for a family of 4 include, at a minimum, the following items:

- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- 1 hypoallergenic adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram)
- 5 antiseptic wipe packets
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each)
- 1 blanket (space blanket)
- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- 1 hypoallergenic adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram)
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each)
- 1 blanket (space blanket)

- 1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- 1 instant cold compress
- 2 pair of non-latex gloves (size: large)
- 2 hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately 1 gram each)
- 1 roller bandage (3 inches wide)
- 1 roller bandage (4 inches wide)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- 1 splint
- Oral thermometer (non-mercury/non-glass)
- 2 triangular bandages
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- First aid instruction booklet

Larger first-aid kits can accommodate specific needs, such as splinting a broken bone, as well as help you treat a larger number of injuries. It’s a good idea to adapt each kit for its specific use. For example, if you or your family plays sports, your first-aid kit should include sport tape for injuries. A walker or cyclist could store wet wipes and tape for blisters in a sealable plastic bag and stash the mini-kit in a pocket or small pack. Here are some other ideas:

- Biodegradable soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Iodine pads
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Wet wipes
- Eye drops and saline solution
- Mole skin
- Elastic bandage roll
- Sanitary napkin (excellent for profusely bleeding wounds)
- Sport tape
- Butterfly bandages and narrow adhesive strips
- Splinting materials
- Roll of absorbent cotton as padding for a splint
- Cotton-tipped swabs
- Small plastic bags

More —>
Know what to do

Would you know the signs that indicate someone’s choking or what to do if someone appears to have a broken ankle? Test your knowledge by answering the following questions.

How can you tell if a bone is broken?

It’s possible to move a broken limb, and it’s also possible to NOT be able to move a limb that is broken. The only accurate way to diagnose a broken bone or torn ligament is with an X-ray. (If the bone is sticking out through the skin, however, you can be relatively sure that it’s broken!)

What do you do for a sprained ankle?

If you twist your knee or ankle, follow the RICE principle. Rest the injured area. For 24 hours, put Ice on it for 20 minutes at a time (with 20-40 minutes between each application). Lightly Compress (wrap) it with a bandage, and Elevate it above your heart. If there is swelling, do not apply heat! If you can’t stand or walk, get medical help.

What do you do when you burn yourself while cooking?

If you get a first-degree burn, it’s a good idea to run cold water (not butter, vinegar, or ice) over it for at least 10 minutes and then apply antibiotic ointment. Second- and third-degree burns (blistering or white and without feeling) need to be treated by a doctor right away.

What if your fingers turn white from the cold?

Cold fingers and toes are best warmed with lukewarm water or dry heat. If you suspect frostbite, do not rub the skin.

How do you treat someone who’s having a seizure?

Roll the person onto his or her side, and let the person move freely. Remove objects that could cause harm (e.g., glasses, furniture). Don’t hold the person down, and do not attempt to put anything in his or her mouth.

How can you tell if someone is choking?

The universal sign for choking is clutching the throat with one or both hands – but that is not the only sign. Signs include wide eyes, suddenly leaving the room, gagging, coughing, being unable to talk, gesturing, wheezing, turning blue, and passing out. The person can appear agitated, panicked, or embarrassed. It’s best to take a “watch and wait” approach if the person is forcefully coughing and not turning blue or if the person is able to verbally answer when you ask, “Are you choking?” Do not give anything to drink.

If you knew the answers, you’ve probably had first-aid training!

Basic first-aid training gives you the skills to appropriately respond to emergency situations such as choking, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, burns, bleeding, and broken bones. First aid is easy to learn and could possibly save someone’s life. At the very least, first-aid training will give you confidence to treat minor injuries and recognize life-threatening situations so you can get emergency help fast!
Helpful Tips for Less-Urgent First-Aid Situations

- If you get stung by bee or wasp, do not squeeze or pull out the stinger. Doing so may inject more venom into you. Instead, gently scrape the stinger out and then apply ice or a cold pack to soothe the skin. Antihistamines may relieve itching and burning. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help with pain relief. If the stung person is having difficulty breathing, call 911.

- To stop a nosebleed, sit up, tilt your head forward slightly, and apply pressure to the fleshy part of your nose for 5-10 minutes. If your nosebleed lasts more than 15 minutes, call your doctor.

- Blisters should be bandaged, not popped.

- Rinse a knocked-out tooth in milk or clean water and place it back into the socket from which it came. Only touch the crown of the tooth – not the root. Then, contact your dentist for emergency assistance. If you are uncomfortable with re-implanting the tooth, store it in milk and take it with you to the dentist right away. It’s best for the tooth to be re-implanted within an hour after being knocked out.

- Resist the urge to rub your eye when you get a foreign object (e.g., eyelash or dust) in it because you could scratch your cornea. Instead, rinse your eye with tap water or saline solution. (Take out a contact lens prior to trying to dislodge any foreign object from your eye.) If the object is deeply embedded, contact your doctor.

- The best way to treat a wound is to flush out the dirt with clean water. Do not dig into a wound to remove debris as this could push bacteria deeper into the wound. Apply antibiotic ointment, and bandage the wound to keep it moist and clean. Wounds will not heal more quickly if exposed to fresh air at night. Keep the bandage on.

Sign up for basic first aid or CPR classes.

1. American Red Cross – Several First Aid and CPR certification classes. Price varies. [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

2. CPR Today – First Aid and CPR certification in 30-60 minutes. Cost $25 for each course. [www.cpptoday.com](http://www.cpptoday.com)


4. FirstAidWeb – First Aid and CPR classes. Cost $25; Free if no certificate given. [www.firstaidweb.com](http://www.firstaidweb.com)

An Internet search for “Free First Aid Course” or “Free CPR Course” will give you many options.

Instructions
1. Post the Health Challenge Calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. To complete the Challenge, you must have assembled at least one first-aid kit for home, work, or play. You must also complete a course either in first aid or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Keep up this practice for a lifetime of good health and wellbeing.
3. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

### CHALLENGE
Assemble a first-aid kit & complete a safety course.

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<th>MONTH:</th>
<th>Weight &amp; weekly summary</th>
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_______ I assembled a first-aid kit for home, work, or play. _______ I completed first-aid training. _______ I completed a CPR course.

_______ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Name _______________________________________________  Date __________________________