

Kentucky Tickborne Disease Fact Sheet (May 2013)

Tick borne diseases in Kentucky are associated with warm weather, tall grasses and brush. The seasonal occurrence of ticks coincides with people spending time outdoors in tall grasses and hiking.

The most common tick borne diseases in Kentucky are **Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever** and **ehrlichiosis**. **Lyme Disease** is very uncommon in Kentucky although the specific tick that transmits the disease is occasionally seen by University of Kentucky entomologists.

It is best to take simple precautions and avoid tick bites.



Recommendations to avoid tick bites:

- Walk in the center of trails so weeds do not brush against you.
- Use repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin. Always follow product instructions.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants (especially the cuffs), socks and tents. Or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Tuck long pants into your socks and boots. Wearing light-colored pants makes ticks easier to see.
- In areas where there are ticks, check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks (especially ears, hair, neck, legs and between the toes).
- If you let your pets outdoors, check them often for ticks. Ticks can “hitch a ride” on your pets, but fall off in your home before they feed. Tick collars, sprays, shampoos, or monthly “top spot” medications help protect against ticks.

If you do find a tick, on yourself, others or pets, remove it promptly. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with fine-point tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick. Wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water and apply an antiseptic to the bite site. The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses can include fever, chills, aches and pains, and rash. Early recognition and treatment of the infection decreases the risk of serious complications.

Information provided by the Kentucky Department for Public Health