

SKILL BUILDER: HOW TO DO A PROPER TICK CHECK



Connect with us!



PAParksAndForests.org | 717-236-7644

Summer in Pennsylvania means long days on the trail, evenings in the garden, and—yes—more active ticks. A quick tick check is one of the simplest ways to protect yourself and your family from tick borne illnesses. Here's how to do it effectively.

1. START WITH YOUR CLOTHING

Before you go inside, brush off your clothes—especially socks, cuffs, and waistbands. Ticks often hitch a ride on fabric before finding skin.

2. USE GOOD LIGHTING

Ticks can be as small as a poppy seed. Stand near a bright window or use a flashlight or phone light to help you see clearly.

3. CHECK THE "HOT SPOTS"

Ticks prefer warm, hidden areas. Make sure to check:

- Hairline and scalp
- Behind ears
- Underarms
- Inside elbows
- Waistband area
- Behind knees
- Ankles and between toes

If you've been gardening or sitting in grass, check your back and shoulders as well.

4. DON'T FORGET YOUR GEAR—AND YOUR PETS

Ticks can cling to backpacks, blankets, and dogs. Give everything a once over before bringing it inside.



5. IF YOU FIND A TICK, REMOVE IT SAFELY

Use fine tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Clean the area with soap and water. Take a photo of the site to help monitor.

6. MONITOR THE BITE SITE

If you develop a rash, fever, or flu like symptoms in the days or weeks after a bite, contact a healthcare provider.

A few minutes of prevention can make all the difference. Stay safe, stay aware, and enjoy every moment of summer in Pennsylvania's parks and forests.



WHAT ABOUT YOUR PETS?

- **Use vet recommended preventatives:** Collars, topicals, or oral medications.
- **Check after every outing:** Pay special attention to ears, paws, armpits, and under the collar.
- **Brush before going inside:** A quick brush can dislodge ticks before they attach.
- **Wash bedding regularly:** Ticks can hide in blankets and pet beds.