

# 7. Adventures in Climate and Health: Tick Takedown: Becoming Bug-Proof Superheroes



## Student Objectives:

- The student will be able to identify the various clothing items that should be worn to prevent ticks from attaching to their body.
- The student will be able to identify where ticks live.
- The student will be able to describe how ticks get on people.
- The student will be able to conduct a tick check.
- The student will become familiar with the correct way to remove a tick.

## Materials Required:

Visuals of clothing, beware of tick signs, stuffed animal (to check for ticks), tick removal tool, visuals of ticks, tiny pompoms to represent ticks.

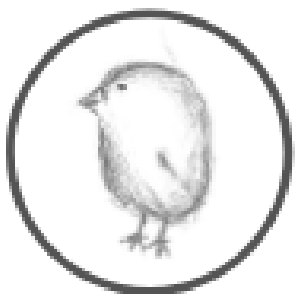
## Key Vocabulary:

Habitat: the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism

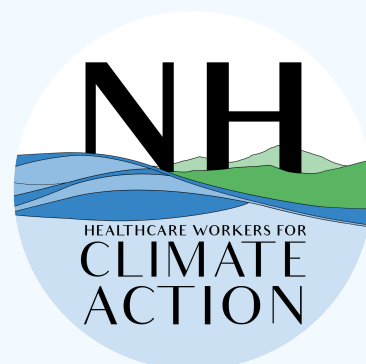
Prevent: keep something from happening

Repellent: a substance that deters insects or pests from approaching or settling

Tick: tiny parasites that bite humans and animals



**Climate and Health Initiative  
for Children  
in Kearsarge & Sunapee**



## **Background Information:**

Children between the ages of 5 and 14 are at the highest risk of getting Lyme disease, according to the CDC. This is likely because of their frequent outdoor activities and tendency to play in grassy or wooded areas where ticks are commonly found.

Ticks are active when it's above 40 degrees, which could be any time during the year. There are no "tick free" months, their activity depends on the temperature.

Teaching kids about ticks and how to avoid them can help prevent tick bites and reduce the risk of tick-borne illnesses like Lyme Disease. The best way to avoid getting sick with diseases that are caused by tick bites is by keeping ticks off your body. Knowing how to dress to keep ticks off your body, knowing where ticks live, or their habitat, how to check for ticks, and how to remove them, are important things to learn.

### **Clothing**

Speaking of clothes, if you know you are going to be spending time outdoors in or near places where ticks may be living, it is a good idea to wear certain types of clothing that will prevent ticks from getting to your skin. These include long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, socks, and shoes that cover your feet. An extra step that should be taken after you get dressed is tucking your pant legs into your socks, and your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to help you spot a tick on your clothes. Any exposed skin should be protected by a repellent, but that should only be applied by an adult.

## **Be aware of Tick Habitats**

Just like humans, ticks have homes too. However, ticks live outdoors rather than indoors. Common outdoor areas where ticks are most likely to be living include tall grass or weeds, shrubs, and leaves that you may see in woods, yards, or parks. They feed off a variety of mammals and birds that are found in these areas too, such as squirrels, deer, sheep birds, cats, dogs. Ticks don't fly or jump but climb on to animals or humans as they brush past. When possible, use footpaths and avoid grassy areas when walking. Always check your pets for ticks after they have enjoyed areas where ticks live.

## **Tick Check**

Make sure you check for ticks after spending time outside. Ticks can be brought indoors on shoes and clothing, too! Conduct a full-body check using a mirror, check kids and pets too! Learn more here: <https://tickfreenh.org/check/> Always check for ticks after spending time outside (even in your backyard!). Common places ticks like to hide are under the arms, between the legs, around the waist, and even in or around your hair. Visit <https://tickfreenh.org/check/> to learn more.

## Tick Removal

If you find a tick on your body, it's important to remove it as soon as possible. Here are the steps to follow for safe tick removal:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool to grasp the tick as close to your skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick, as this can cause its mouthparts to break off and remain in your skin.
3. Once the tick is removed, clean the bite area with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.
4. Save the tick in a container in case you develop symptoms and need to have it tested for disease.
5. Monitor the bite area for several weeks and contact your healthcare provider if you develop a rash, fever, or other symptoms.

## Repellent

There are many steps or actions you can take prevent tick bites. One that many of you may have heard of is putting on insect repellent (which is just another term for bug spray) before going outdoors. Using insect repellent is a good way to keep ticks off you, but do not forget to always ask a parent, guardian, or teacher to help you put it on. Did you know there is even a type of insect repellent that is made especially for clothes? It is called permethrin.

Sources:

NH Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Services, Dec 2017  
Tick Free NH, <https://tickfreenh.org/#>

Helpful Resources:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/injuries/skin-injuries/tick-bites>

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/inline-documents/sonh/curriculumk-1.pdf>

# Sing a Song!



“Head and shoulders knees and toes  
Knees and toes  
Head and shoulders knees and toes  
Knees and toes  
eyes and ears  
And mouth and nose  
Head and shoulders knees and toes  
Knees and toes  
Feet and tummies arms and chins  
Arms and chins  
Feet and tummies arms and chins  
Arms and chins  
And eyes and ears  
And mouth and shins  
Feet and tummies arms and chins  
Arms and chins  
Hands and fingers legs and lips  
Legs and lips  
Hands and fingers legs and lips  
Legs and lips  
And eyes and ears  
And mouth and hips  
Hands and fingers legs and lips  
Legs and lips”

# Procedure:

1. Fill out the K and W on the KWL chart.
2. Talk with the students about ticks and ask what their experience has been with them this year, compared to last year. Was it the same, more, or less and why do they think there has been a change. Then ask questions about tick bite prevention.
  - a. “How do you think you can prevent getting bitten by a tick?”
  - b. “What types of clothing do you think are appropriate if you are going to be outside in areas where ticks live?”
  - c. “Is there anything that you or your parents already do to prevent tick bites?”
3. Read the background information about clothing for this lesson to the students. Set up pictures of various types of clothing. Have the students identify the best choices for preventing ticks from getting on their body. Put the pompom “ticks” on the different colors of clothing. Then ask the students, “Which color clothing makes it easiest to spot a tick?”
4. Read the background information about tick habitats. Ask questions about how a tick can get from their habitat onto a person. Ask questions about where they play and where household pets may go.
  - a. Play a game of “tick tag” to help kids understand how ticks can move from person to person. Have one person pretend to be a tick and try to “tag” other players by touching them.
5. Read the background information on tick removal. Some students might be old enough to remove a tick independently, while others will need adult support.
  - a. Have the students take turns doing a tick check on the pet dog and see if they can find the hidden ticks.
  - b. Have children take turns removing the ticks from the pet dog.
6. Conclude the lesson by completing the L on the KWL chart and give each participant tick prevention information to take home.