

Safety Spotlight

Protecting Yourself from Ticks and Mosquitoes

Outdoor workers may be exposed to vector-borne diseases spread from the bites of infected ticks and mosquitoes. Ticks and mosquitoes may carry bacteria, parasites or viruses.¹

One of the most common tick-borne diseases in the U.S. is Lyme disease. Ticks are found in wooded areas, high grass, or leaf litter. They are most active during the spring, summer and fall, but in warmer areas may be active all year round.¹

One of the most common diseases carried by mosquitoes in the U.S. is West Nile virus infection. Mosquitoes may be found near standing water, or in weedy or wooded areas. They are usually most active during dawn and dusk in the warmer months.¹



Recommend that workers wear light-colored

long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and hat, when possible.²



Symptoms of Vector-Borne Diseases¹

- Body/muscle aches
- Fever
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Joint pain
- Rash
- Stiff neck
- Paralysis

Workplace Controls for Tick-Borne Diseases

Recommendations for Employers²

- Provide training for workers that includes information about the following:
 - » How tick-borne diseases are spread
 - » The risks of exposure and infection
 - » How workers can protect themselves from ticks
 - » The importance of the timely reporting of workplace illnesses and injuries
- Recommend that workers wear light-colored long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and hat, when possible.
 - » If worker uniforms are provided, provide long-sleeved shirts and long pants as options.
- Provide workers with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.

¹ NIOSH Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Ticks and Mosquitoes. (2014, June 06). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-119/>.

² Tick-Borne Diseases - Recommendations. (2011, September 22). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tick-borne/recommendation.html>.

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- ♦ Provide workers with repellents (such as Permethrin) to provide greater protection. Permethrin kills ticks on contact. It can be used on clothing but not skin.
- ♦ When possible, have workers avoid working at sites with woods, bushes, tall grass, and leaf litter. When avoiding these sites is not possible, personal protective measures are of particular importance. If work in these higher-risk sites must occur, take the following steps to reduce tick populations:
 - » Remove leaf litter.
 - » Remove, mow, or cut back tall grass and brush.
 - » Discourage deer activity.

Recommendations for Workers²

- ♦ Wear a hat and light-colored clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks.
- ♦ Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.
 - » [EPA's search tool](#) can help you find the product that best suits your needs.
 - » Always follow product instructions.
- ♦ Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin.
 - » Permethrin kills ticks on contact and can be used to treat shoes, clothing, and gear, but should not be used on skin.
 - » One application of permethrin to pants, socks, and shoes remains protective through several washings.
 - » Alternatively, permethrin-treated clothing is available.
- ♦ Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day. The immature forms of these ticks are very small and may be hard to see.
 - » Shower/bathe as soon as possible after working outdoors to wash off and check for ticks.
 - » Remember to check your hair, underarms, and groin for ticks.
 - » Immediately remove ticks from your body using fine-tipped tweezers: Grasp the tick firmly and as close to your skin as possible and pull the tick's body away from your skin with a steady motion. Clean the area with soap and water. Removing infected ticks within 24 hours reduces your risk of being infected with the Lyme disease bacterium.
- ♦ Wash and dry work clothes in a hot dryer to kill any ticks present.
- ♦ Learn the symptoms of tick-borne diseases. If you develop symptoms, seek medical attention and tell your health care provider that you work outdoors in an area where ticks may be present.



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² This is a sample guideline furnished to you by Fleury Risk Management, Group Manager. Your organization should review and make the necessary modifications to meet the needs of your organization. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing risk exposure to the public, personnel, and property.
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Workplace Controls for Mosquito Borne Diseases (i.e. West Nile)

Recommendations for Employers³

- Avoid leaving containers that can accumulate water in an uncovered or upright position, such as, wheelbarrows, drums, buckets, cans, tarps and other containers.
- Drain or pump out collected water from newly constructed swimming pools, rain gutters and ditches.
- Properly store any open containers in the work area that are not being used such as buckets and cans.
- Create holes to drain water from containers that cannot be thrown out.
- Fill in any potholes, patches and other areas where water is likely to accumulate.
- Frequently check ponds, birdbaths, animal feeding and drinking troughs and other bodies of standing water. Use aeration, wherever possible, as a way to prevent mosquito growth.

Recommendations for Workers³

- Cover as much of your skin as possible by wearing shirts with long-sleeves, long pants, and socks whenever possible (use light weight clothing to minimize the potential for heat-induced illnesses).
- Avoid use of perfumes and colognes when working outdoors during peak times when mosquitoes may be active; mosquitoes may be more attracted to individuals wearing perfumes and colognes.
- Use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient. Repellents containing DEET or picaridin typically provide longer-lasting protection than the other products, and oil of lemon eucalyptus provides longer lasting protection than other plant-based repellents. Permethrin, is another long-lasting repellent, should only be applied to clothing and gear, not directly to skin.
- Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors. In general, the more active ingredient a repellent contains, the longer it will protect against mosquito bites. For example, the more DEET a repellent contains, the longer time it can protect you from mosquito bites, with protection times ranging from 1 hour (4.75% DEET) to 5 hours (23.8% DEET). Spray insect repellent on the outside of your clothing, as it is possible for mosquitoes to bite through thin clothing.
- Do NOT: spray insect repellent on skin that is under clothing or on skin that is already irritated, or that has cuts/lacerations; spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas; spray a pump or aerosol product directly on your face (spray on hands and carefully rub onto face).
- After returning indoors, use soap and water to wash skin that has been treated with insect repellent.

³ Workplace Precautions Against West Nile Virus. (2012, August). Retrieved from <https://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib082903b.html>.

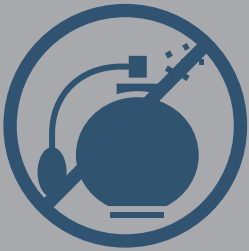


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