

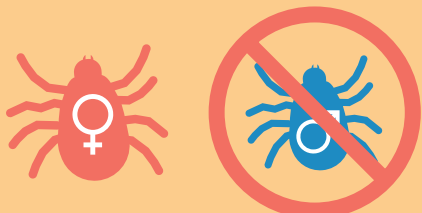
MYTH FACT TICKS

Summer is often thought of as tick season. But ticks don't die off over the winter, nor do they stop looking for a host. They're active any time the temperature is over freezing. But this, however, is just one myth about these bloodsuckers.

According to Dr. Ameera Nauman, pediatrician with OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center, a lot of confusion still surrounds these little arachnids.

MYTH FACT

Only female ticks bite



Most ticks found in Illinois will bite humans regardless of their sex or age. All Deer ticks, which carry Lyme disease, will bite humans at any age. However, the adult female and nymph are most commonly found on people.

MYTH FACT

Ticks only carry Lyme Disease

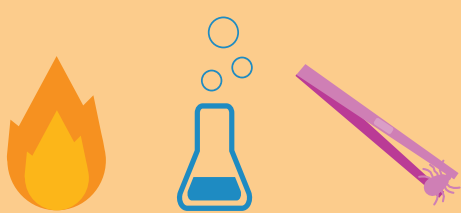


While Lyme disease is the most common and well known tick-borne disease, these have also been reported in the Midwest:

- Anaplasmosis (Upper Midwest)
- Babesiosis (Northeast and upper Midwest)
- Bourbon Virus
- Borrelia Miyamotoi Disease
- Borrelia Mayonii
- Heartland Virus
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever
- Tularemia

MYTH FACT

You should remove a tick with a heat source or chemical



This myth is a home remedy idea for making the tick "back out." All you need to remove a tick is a pair of tweezers, grasping as close to the skin as possible and slowly pulling the tick away without twisting. Not only can using a heat source be dangerous, it can cause infected saliva to be pushed into the bite, increasing the chance for infection. After removal, wash the bite location with soap and water and watch for a reaction.

MYTH FACT

Ticks burrow under the skin



A tick will feed until it becomes full and then fall off. That takes anywhere from three to six days. The area around the bite might start to swell around the head of the tick, but the tick doesn't burrow below the skin.

MYTH FACT

Stay out of the woods and you will be fine



Ticks don't fall from trees. They live on the ground and migrate up a host before biting. Typically, a tick will travel by riding on a host like a mouse, so you can encounter ticks in your yard or walking in any tall grass. However, you are more likely to encounter ticks in fields or wooded areas with tall grass. If you are going to be in high-risk areas, try to make a clothing barrier to keep the ticks away from skin, tuck your pant legs into your socks and your shirt into your belt.

MYTH FACT

You will have a rash or bullseye around the bite if you're infected



Not all people experience telltale signs of a transmitted disease. According to the CDC, only about 70 to 80 percent of people infected with Lyme disease get this type of rash. If you suspect a tick-borne disease, talk to your primary care provider and explain when you were bit and what symptoms you have been experiencing.

MYTH FACT

Once bitten, you are infected



Not all ticks carry diseases, and the diseases carried by ticks are not spread by merely being bitten. It is the toxins, secretions or organisms in the tick's saliva transmitted through the bite that cause disease. It is estimated that in high-risk areas, only 2 percent of deer tick bites cause Lyme disease. Ticks must be attached for two to 96 hours to transmit disease.



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