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Vector Spotlight Ticks



General Information

Ticks are blood-sucking arthropods. They are a concern because some species can transmit diseases or parasites to humans, pets and wildlife. Ticks do not fly, jump or fall out of trees. They are usually found in grassy areas, in brush and in wooded areas. Contrary to popular belief, ticks do not imbed their heads in skin. Ticks are equipped with mouthparts adapted to penetrate and hold fast in the skin of its host. Additionally, they secrete a cement-like material that helps them stay attached to their host.



Health Risks

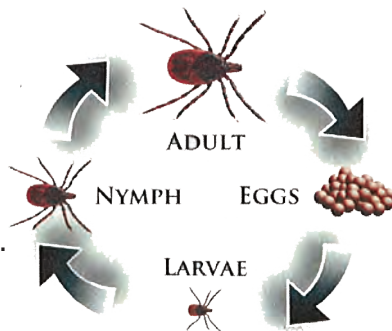
Ticks can transmit several diseases including Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Disease transmission occurs during the feeding process. If the victim of a tick bite seeks medical attention for any reason, the tick bite should always be reported. Early symptoms of Lyme disease may include head and muscle aches, sore throat, nausea, fever, stiff neck or fatigue. Later symptoms may involve the skin, eyes, heart, nervous system, brain or joints.

Most ticks spend a bulk of their lives on or near the ground waiting for a suitable host animal. Since they cannot run or fly, ticks must climb onto an appropriate object, such as tall grass or weeds. It is from these advantageous positions that they wait for a suitable host to pass by. This behavior is called questing.



What is their life cycle?

Ticks go through four life stages: egg, larva, nymph and adult. During the larval stage, ticks have only six legs. They develop their last pair of legs in the nymphal stage. Ticks require a blood meal to grow and molt into each stage. Females can produce between 3,000 to 4,500 eggs.



Western Black-Legged Tick

Pacific Coast Tick



What do they Look Like?

- The Pacific Coast tick (*Dermacentor accidentalis*) is one of the most common ticks found in Orange County especially along the coastal regions. It is reddish brown in color with white or pale yellow markings.
- The Western Black Legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) is the only tick in Orange County known to transmit Lyme Disease. It is reddish brown with black legs and is approx. 1/8 inch long, with the males being slightly smaller.



I Found a Tick On My Skin!

Tick Removal

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick's mouthparts as close to the skin as possible
- Gently pull the tick straight out with steady pressure.
- Do not twist the tick, or try to remove it with fire or petroleum jelly
- Apply antiseptic to the bite area after removing tick.
- Wash your hands with soap and water

Protect Yourself

The best protection is to avoid coming in contact with ticks. Around your home:

- Keep grass mowed low & cut back dense shrubs
- Remove leaf piles

When camping:

- Stay on groomed trails
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved clothing
- Tuck pants into socks or boots
- Conduct regular tick checks throughout the day

Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District



/vectorcontrol



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