

# TICK PREVENTION – What You Need to Know to Remain Safe from Tick Bites

## **Make your yard less attractive to ticks and help reduce tick populations**

Mow your grass often.

Remove leaf litter and brush near play/recreation areas.

Create a three-foot or wider border of wood chips, mulch, or gravel between lawn and woods and stonewalls.

Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge to let in more sunlight.

Ticks like moisture. Adopt xeriscape (plants for dryer conditions) and hardscape landscaping techniques using gravel pathways and mulches. Consider the use of decking, tile, or gravel in areas by the house and areas frequently traveled.

Use plantings that do not attract deer or exclude deer with fencing.

Widen woodland walking trails on your property.

Use the least-toxic pesticide application as a targeted barrier treatment around home perimeters. Always read and follow pesticide label directions. Pesticides are showing up in our wells and water supplies and should always be used with caution since many are linked with health issues such as cancer, autism, and early onset of Alzheimer's. Alternatives such as Garlic Oil and Cedar Oil can be effective for treating woodland borders.

## **Discourage Rodent Activity**

Remove Japanese Barberry from yards and wooded areas. Barberry harbors the white footed mouse that is responsible for the transmission of Lyme disease.

Restrict the use of groundcover, such as pachysandra in areas frequented by family and pets.

Remove trash and old furniture from your yard to discourage rodent nesting.

Remove brush and leaves around stonewalls and wood piles.

Move firewood piles and bird feeders away from the house.

Cleanup and seal stonewalls and small openings around the home.

## **Protect Loved Ones and Pets**

Move children's swing sets, sand boxes, and other playground equipment away from the woodland edges and place them on a wood chip or mulch foundations.

Monitor children when outdoors to keep them out of brushy, overgrown, grassy, and wooded areas, particularly in spring and early summer when young ticks feed.

Manage pet activity. Cats should always be kept indoors. Do not allow dogs to roam into wooded areas where they can come in contact with ticks and bring them into your home.

## **Personal Protection**

Wear light-colored clothing (to more easily spot ticks) and wear a hat when working in the yard.

Long-sleeved shirts tucked in and long pants tucked into socks or boots will prevent/delay ticks from reaching your skin.

High boots or closed shoes that cover the entire foot are recommended.

Use appropriate repellents on skin and on clothing.

Shower immediately after working outdoors or when tick exposure is likely.

Wash and dry clothes at high temperatures to kill ticks that may remain on clothing.

Conduct careful body checks for ticks on yourself and children. Check pets as soon as they come indoors.

Promptly remove a tick with fine-tipped tweezers. Grab the tick by its head as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick since mouth parts can break off in the skin. Cleanse skin with an antiseptic. See your doctor if you experience a rash or flu-like symptoms.

