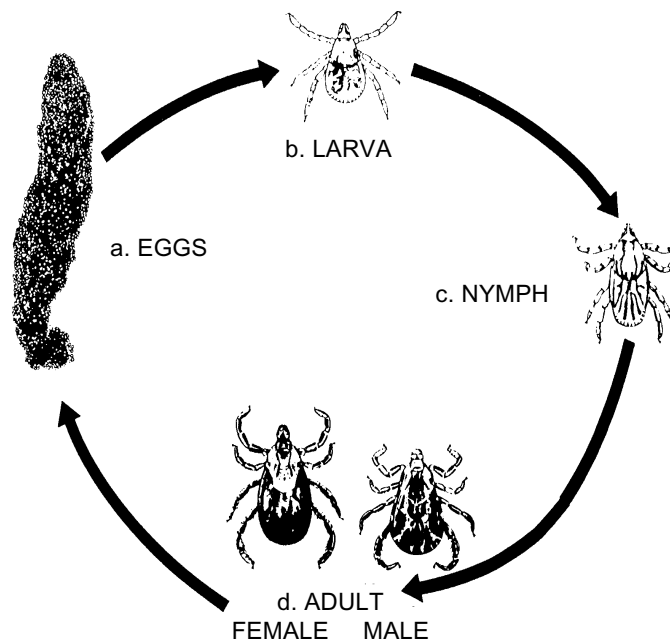


Ticks are annoying and are major carriers of disease in North Carolina. Here are some facts about ticks.

TICK BIOLOGY

Ticks are arachnids that are close relatives of the spiders. There are four stages of growth in the tick - the egg, the larva, the nymph, and the adult. Most common ticks in North Carolina have a similar life-cycle. After hatching from the egg, the larva, sometimes called a "seed tick", searches for an animal from which to take a meal. Depending upon the kind of tick, the source of this meal will vary. Not all ticks will attack humans and each stage may attack a different type of animal. The larval tick feeds, drops from the animal (or host), and soon enters the nymphal stage. Another meal is sought by the hungry nymph. After dropping from the host, the fed nymph soon becomes an adult. Adults again seek a host and feed. When feeding, the tick firmly attaches itself to the skin. The mouthparts of the tick are barbed like a fish hook and once in place become hard to remove. The tick also produces a glue which holds the mouthparts in the skin. When attached, the tick begins to suck blood. If not removed, the adult female tick will remain attached 5-7 days. During this time she may

become four times greater in size and 100 times greater in weight! The male tick also feeds, but not as much as the female. Mating takes place on the host. After feeding, the female drops from the host. About a week later she may lay as many as a 3 - 4,000 eggs - the female tick then dies. Eggs hatch in about a week. Depending upon the type of tick, the cycle from egg to adult may take several months or several years.



TICK LIFE CYCLE

TICKS AND DISEASE

Ticks are major carriers (or vectors) of disease in North Carolina. Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a disease that is very common in the state. Ehrlichiosis is also very common and causes an illness much like spotted fever, but usually without spots. Lyme disease is found in North Carolina, but is not too common. All of these diseases are easily treated with antibiotics, if diagnosed early. It is important to remember the date when a tick has bitten. A flu-like illness 2-14 days after the bite could mean the start of a tick-carried disease; a physician should be seen. An unusual problem called tick paralysis occurs when a feeding tick produces a toxin (poison) that affects certain nerves. This is rare in people, but often found in dogs. Removing the tick stops the paralysis.

CONTROLLING TICKS

Usually ticks are a problem around the home because a pet dog has carried them into the yard or house. Female ticks on the animal feed, drop-off, and lay eggs. The eggs hatch and thousands of larval ticks seek a meal - usually from the dog. Controlling ticks around the home means keeping the animal free of ticks with the use of a suitable dip, dust, or shampoo and a tick collar.

Vets have very good treatments against ticks that are applied to a pet's skin or given by mouth. Dogs can be deticked by hand, but remember to protect your fingers or use tweezers (see below). Where ticks have become a problem around the home an insecticide labelled for tick control can be used. Brush, long grass, and leaf litter are places where ticks may rest or wait for a host. Removing this material by cutting, bagging, or burning will help control ticks.

PROTECTING AGAINST TICKS

When outdoors people often become exposed to ticks. Several things can be done to prevent tick bites. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long-legged pants in areas infested by ticks. Tuck pants legs into socks and shirttails into pants. As ticks climb they can't get beneath the clothing. Use repellants to discourage ticks. Remain on trails wherever possible. Check frequently for ticks on the body - ticks on the scalp are often overlooked.

PROPER REMOVAL OF TICKS

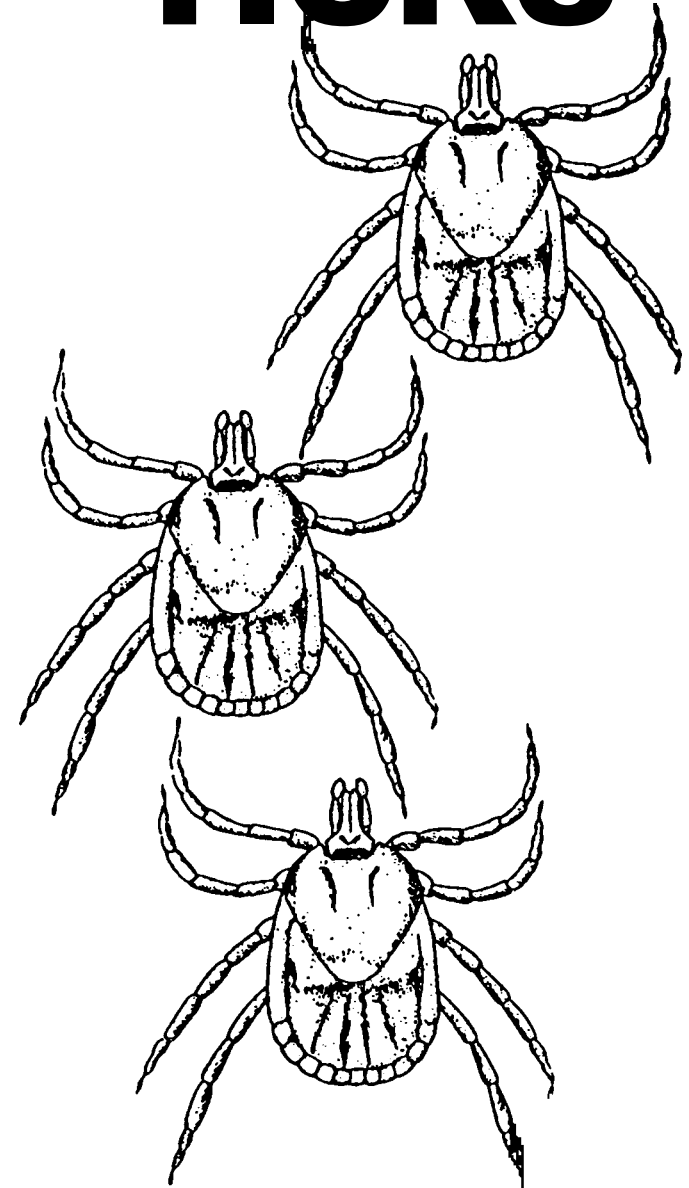
The best way to remove ticks from a person or a pet, is to grasp the tick firmly with tweezers as close as

possible to where it is attached to the skin. Fingers may also be used if protected by a tissue. Fluids from the tick could transmit disease. Slowly and steadily, pull the tick straight up. Do not twist, this will break-off the mouthparts. Treat the area with antiseptic. Note the date of the tick bite, in case of any signs of illness. Once a tick has become firmly attached to the skin, the use of vaseline, fingernail polish, kerosene or a hot match will not dislodge it.

Need more information?

Contact Your
Local Health Department
or the
**Public Health
Pest Management Section**
at
(919) 733-6407

TICKS



...Some Facts



North Carolina Department of Environment
and Natural Resources



Division of Environmental Health
Public Health Pest Management Section

(ERC 95) 8G-3/00