

TICKS & CHIGGERS

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

6.2

TICKS

DESCRIPTION

Ticks are small, dark insects. Tick bites are pretty obvious since the tick will probably be sticking out, with its head and pincers buried in your skin. The trick is to get the tick out in one piece, so it doesn't leave its head and pincers in your skin.

REMOVING TICKS

Grasp the tick with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and pull perpendicular to the skin with a slow, steady motion. After removal, check the tick to make certain the head is attached. If the tick is moving, it has a head. Other methods of removing ticks are not recommended.

TICK COMPLICATIONS

Ticks may carry disease such as Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme Disease, or Ehrlichiosis, which is very rare. If a rash, fever, halo around bite sight, muscle or joint pain, or headache develops after a tick bite (from a few days to a few weeks later), see a medical provider immediately.

TICK PREVENTION

When you go outdoors, check yourself (and your pets) frequently for ticks and remove them immediately after you notice them. Wear long pants tucked inside your socks. Ticks are easier to see on light-colored clothing. Use a tick repellent such as DEET.

CHIGGERS

DESCRIPTION

Chiggers (redbugs) are small red mites that cause a tremendous itch. Their bite causes the skin to develop a tiny tube, which causes the itching until the tube is eventually reabsorbed by the body 7-10 days after the bite. Chigger bites usually appear around the beltline, behind the knees, in armpits, and other places where skin touches skin.

CHIGGER TREATMENT

Keep the sores clean by soaking them in warm water twice a day. Calamine lotion or steroid creams (Cortaid) may help to relieve the itching. Oral antihistamines, available over-the-counter, may also help relieve itching.

CHIGGER PREVENTION

Use insect repellent, wear long clothes and take a bath or shower immediately after coming home. Wash your clothes in hot (100°) water or the chiggers will attack you when you put them on again. Last, but not least, keep moving. Sitting on the ground in chigger territory (places where there is long grass) increases the chance of chigger bites. Use a repellent such as DEET.

Student Health Center



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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.