## How to Do a Tick Check

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t's that time of year to add a new routine to your daily hygiene — tick checks for you and your family. Just like brushing your teeth, you should be checking for ticks daily. If you have young children, check them daily for ticks, too.

## Here's how to do a tick check:

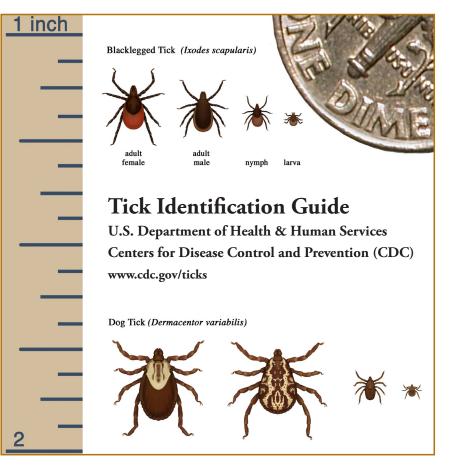
**I. Check your clothing.** Start by carefully examining your clothing. Wearing light-colored clothes and tucking your pant legs into your socks when you're walking in the woods will help you find dark-colored ticks more easily.

2. Search your nooks and crannies.

Ticks like the dark, warm places on a person, so check those spots regularly. Important places to look include: behind your ears, your hairline and hair, armpits, groin, between your toes, and behind your knees.

## 3. Pay attention to constriction zones.

Make sure to check your waistline, collars, and other areas where your clothing creates a constriction.



**4. If you find a tick, identify its species. Deer ticks**, also known as blacklegged ticks, can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease. When you find a tick attached to yourself or a family member, it's important to find out if it's a deer tick or the less harmful American dog tick. Thankfully, telling these two ticks apart is not difficult. Using a magnifier, take a close look at the tick's size and coloring. The **American dog tick** is about one-eighth of an inch long and is brown and tan, with a speckled pattern on its back. The **blacklegged tick** is two-toned, with a chestnut-brown head and legs and an orange-red rear. Adult blacklegged ticks are one-sixteenth of an inch in length (smaller than dog ticks) but can swell to three-eighths of an inch if they've been attached for a while.

**5. Remove ticks safely.** When you find a tick, remove it carefully using tweezers. Grasp the head of the tick, and pull it out in its entirety. Place the tick on a piece of tape and fold over the tape, trapping the tick inside. In cases where the tick is not attached, simply swipe the tick off with a piece of tape and fold over. If it's a blacklegged tick, contact your doctor.

