

AGES 10-11

# LEARNING MORE ABOUT TICKS



Read the following text and complete the crossword puzzle on the next page.

The most common tick in Canada is the blacklegged tick. Ticks are tiny bugs from the arachnid family, the same family as spiders and mites. Ticks have 4 life stages: egg, larva, nymph, and adult. Nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed and adults are about the size of a sesame seed.

Ticks need blood to develop from one stage to the next. They feed on blood by biting animals and people. Tick bites are not painful because their saliva contains an anaesthetic.

Not all blacklegged ticks carry bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease. Blacklegged ticks can become infected when they feed on infected animals like birds and rodents. People and some animals can get tick-borne diseases when an infected tick feeds on them.

Ticks can be found outside of rural areas—in cities, suburbs, playgrounds and even backyards. Ticks are often found in and near areas with trees, shrubs, tall grass, or piles of leaves. Before you go outdoors, cover exposed skin, wear closed-toe shoes, and use bug spray.



Photo credit - Catherine Bouchard, Public Health Agency of Canada (CB2)

The best way to prevent tick bites is to do a full-body tick check after returning from an outdoor activity. Don't forget to check the Top 10 tick hiding spots on your body:

- head and hair
- in and around the ears
- under the arms
- around the chest
- back (use a mirror or ask for help)
- waist
- belly button
- around the groin
- legs and behind the knees
- between the toes

If there is a tick attached to your skin, it is important to remove it as soon as possible (you can ask an adult for help) with clean, fine-point tweezers. You should grasp the head of the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull slowly. Try not to twist or squeeze the tick when removing it.

Enjoy the outdoors without a tick!



# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ① Nymphs are about the size of a \_\_\_\_\_ seed?
- ② This is one property of tick saliva that ensures their bite doesn't hurt.
- ③ After returning from outdoor activities, we should \_\_\_\_\_ our bodies for ticks.
- ④ One should not say a tick sting, but a tick \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑤ Which part of the tick should be pulled slowly out of the skin?
- ⑥ Name one of the tick-borne diseases caused by the blacklegged tick?
- ⑦ What colour are the legs of the tick you should watch out for?
- ⑧ Before going outdoors, \_\_\_\_\_ exposed skin.
- ⑨ A body part that ticks like to bite: around the \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑩ What can the tick transmit when it bites?
- ⑪ How many stages do ticks go through in their lifetime?
- ⑫ What do ticks need to go from one stage to the next?

**MYSTERY WORD:**

Once you have completed the crossword, unscramble the letters in the yellow boxes to discover the mystery word.

--	--	--	--	--	--

