


This Quick Reference Guide provides general information for Field Services staff to work safely around ticks.

## What you need to know

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| <p><b>General Information</b></p>  | <p>Ticks are external blood feeding parasites of mammals (including humans), birds and reptiles and their size can range from as small as a pinhead to as large as a fingernail.</p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>What ticks look like</b></p>  | <p>There are two tick families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard ticks (family: <i>Ixodidae</i>) - have a hard finger nail-shaped shield on their backs and elongated mouthparts with rows of backward pointing teeth.</li> <li>• Soft ticks (family: <i>Argasidae</i>) - have a wrinkled leathery appearance.</li> </ul> <p>The most common are 'hard' ticks.</p>   |  |  |
| <p><b>Tick Locations</b></p>   | <p>Ticks are found in moist, humid areas such as long grasses and bushland and are more active over spring and summer. Adult ticks attach to the tips of grass blades and vegetation and from there, transfer themselves to passing animals or humans.</p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>Human Reactions</b></p>  | <p>There are three ways a tick can affect humans:</p> <p>No or few symptoms (common)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness</li> <li>• Irritation</li> <li>• Slight swelling at the area</li> <li>• Flu like symptoms</li> </ul>  | <p>Allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis (occasional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain/ swelling at the bite</li> <li>• Rashes</li> <li>• Burning sensation</li> <li>• Pus or discharge</li> <li>• Breathing difficulties</li> </ul> | <p>Tick borne diseases (rare)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full body rashes</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Muscle or joint pain</li> <li>• Fever or chills</li> <li>• Swollen glands</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Minimising Risk</b></p>  | <p>The best way to prevent tick bites is to avoid tick-infested areas. If this isn't possible, use the following controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A long sleeved shirt (tucked into trousers)</li> <li>• Long pants (tucked into socks or boots)</li> <li>• A wide brimmed hat.</li> <li>• Treat clothing with permethrin</li> <li>• Use an insect repellent containing diethyl-meta-toluamide (DEET) or picaridin - re-applied according to the manufacturer's instructions (roughly every 2-3 hours)</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>Self-Inspection</b></p>  | <p>YES. Always inspect yourself if you have been working in long grassy areas or known tick infested areas. Inspect even the smallest red spots as ticks can completely embed themselves. Thoroughly inspect the neck, head, behind the ears and armpits which are all common areas for ticks to bite.</p>  |  |  |



Obvious tick bite



Less-Obvious tick bite

## How to remove

If you are **NOT** allergic to ticks:

- Use ether-containing sprays such as **Wart-Off Freeze®**. This will kill the tick and prevent it from injecting more allergen-containing saliva.
- Use Dermal Scabies Cream for small Scrub or Nymph ticks to avoid unnecessary 'digging around'.
- Use fine-tipped tweezers, grasp as close to the mouth as possible and pull the tick straight up (Do not twist).

BCC Material Code: 4007661  
 Cream Tick Removal 1-10% Permethrin  
 Lyclear Scabies Cream 30g



BCC Material Code: 4009336  
 Spray Freeze Tick Removal Wart Off 38ml



## ALWAYS:

- Clean the wound after removal.
- Dispose of the tick by soaking it in alcohol or sealing it in a bag and throwing it away.
- You can access Initial Care to have the tick removed.
- Report all tick bites to your Supervisor.

## DO NOT

- Touch the tick with fire/ hot match
- Use peppermint oil/ other essential oils
- Apply petroleum jelly
- Pour alcohol onto embedded ticks as they will 'dig' deeper.
- Squeeze the ticks' body
- Crush the tick with your fingers. This could release pathogens.
- Twist the tick, as the head may detach from the body.
- Use Ether-containing aerosol sprays such as Aerostart® or Elastoplast Cold Spray® as they cause rapid toxin release from the tick.

## If Allergic

- Always carry emergency medication (adrenaline epinephrine auto injector e.g. EpiPen®) and a phone to call emergency services.

- Seek medical assistance for the tick to be killed and removed.
- Report tick bites to your Supervisor.

## Related documents

- [Qld Poisons Information Centre – Bites and Stings](#)
- [CA17/625931 Field Services Group Tick Awareness, September 2016](#)
- [Australian museum ticks](#)

## Further information

If you need specialist advice or assistance in regards to ticks, contact your Supervisor or Team Leader.