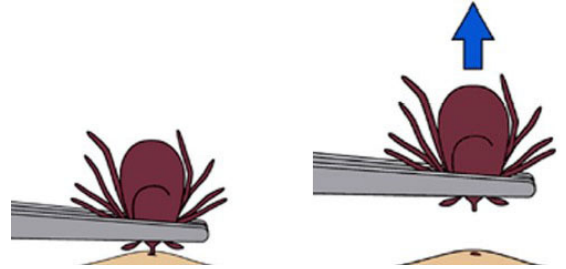


How to Manage a Tick Bite

Daily inspection, especially in the spring and early summer, or if you have pets that go outside. Favorite places ticks like to go on your body include areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, and neck along the hairline, and behind the ears. Daily tick checks are invaluable since a tick ***must be on the body for 24-36 hours to pass the illness to humans***. Thus, a tick check with prompt tick removal is an essential component of Lyme Disease prevention.

Remove a tick if found and record on your calendar the date and site of where the tick was removed. Using alcohol, nail polish or a hot match is not recommended for tick removal. The best method for removing a tick is to grab the base of the tick, against the skin, with fine tweezers (or a removal tool like the Tick Twisters we have at Saugatuck Pediatrics) and steadily pull the tick out. Once the tick is removed it can be discarded.



What if the entire tick is not removed?

If the tick's head is embedded in the skin and cannot be easily removed, just leave it alone. The disease carrying portion of the tick is the abdomen and this is the most easily removed portion. There is no increased risk if the head is left alone to come out on its own. You can keep the bite area clean with soap and water and apply a topical antibiotic for a few days.

Is a rash normal?

A small area of redness or inflammation may be seen for a few days after a tick bite. This is normal and not a Lyme rash. Lyme Disease rashes are typically seen 2 to 30 days after the tick bite. The rash is flat, red and usually non-itchy. It starts small like an insect bite but steadily expands outward with clearing in the center over the course of several days. The rash does not disappear overnight, so if you see a rash at night, your child can be seen the next day or two without worrying that the Lyme rash could be "missed". The appearance of a rash is seen in approximately 75% of children with Lyme Disease.

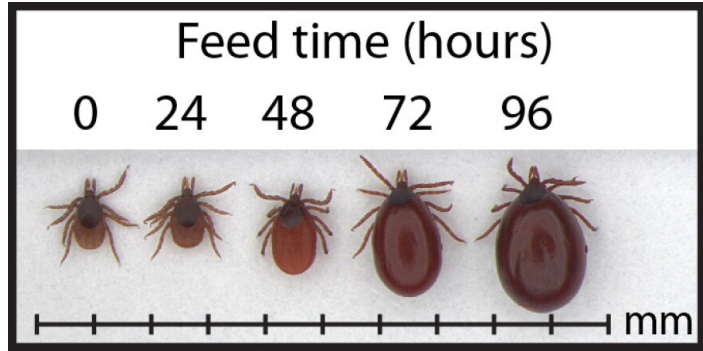


Will you test the tick for me?

Testing the tick is not routinely recommended. If it has been in place for more than 24-36 hours or is engorged you can get the tick identified and tested at the local Department of Health.

Should I get treatment for Lyme Disease after a bite?

Experts do not recommend treating children with antibiotics unless the tick has been in place for more than 24-36 hours and is engorged. In that situation, we can offer a single prophylactic dose of doxycycline (liquid or tablet). We do not treat bites with a full course of antibiotics unless your child develops a characteristic lyme rash or tests positive for the disease.



Diagnostic blood tests take 4-6 weeks from the time of the bite to become positive if an infection occurs- thus bloodwork at the time of the bite is not indicated (or recommended routinely without symptoms of the disease.) The best course of action after removing a tick is careful observation:

1. **Remove the tick as soon as possible by yourself.**
2. **Mark your calendar**
3. **Observe area of bite for the next 30 days**
4. **Call if your child develops a Lyme- like rash, high fever, headache, muscle aches, or red, warm, swollen joint within the 30 days following a tick bite.**

HERE is a terrific article with more information on the management of tick bites in children:
<https://www.thepediatricianmom.com/blog/what-to-do-if-you-find-a-tick-on-your-child>

