



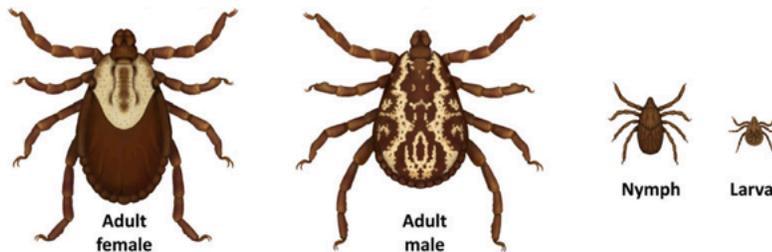
Common Ticks of Virginia

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American Dog Tick

The American Dog Tick, *Dermacentor variabilis*, is about 5 mm long with short stout mouthparts. It is dark brown with light wavy lines or reticulations on its back. It is found mostly in the western sections of Virginia and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Adults are the most common stage found. Image source: www.CDC.gov

American Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)



Lone Star Tick

The Lone Star Tick, *Amblyomma americanum*, is about 5 mm or less in length with long mouthparts. It is light reddish brown with a central white spot on the back of most of the adults. The lone star tick can be very common in the piedmont and coastal plain sections of Virginia. Adults have a white spot on their back, but the seed tick stage lacks this spot. All stages have reddish brown legs. Image source: www.CDC.gov

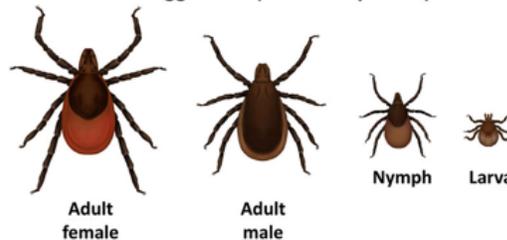
Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)



Deer Tick

The Deer Tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, is a small tick about 2-3 mm in length with long mouthparts. It is off-white or reddish when fed and has black legs. The deer tick until recently was known as *Ixodes dammini*. The Deer Tick is also known as the Blacklegged Tick. Image source: www.CDC.gov

Blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)



Tick Removal

Ticks are best removed with tweezers or by wrapping the tick in tissue paper and pulling out with fingers. Do not twist or jerk, and pull slowly to avoid leaving the mouthparts in the wound. Do not use nail polish, petroleum jelly, alcohol, or hot matches to remove the tick. Wash the wound with an antiseptic after the tick is removed. Kill the tick in rubbing alcohol and keep it in a small vial for a few months in case any disease symptoms develop and the tick needs to be identified.

How to avoid ticks: The following methods of prevention are recommended by the Virginia Department of Health.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Avoid tick infested areas such as tall grass and dense vegetation</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Walk in the center of trails and avoid brushing against weeds and tall grass</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Keep grass and underbrush cut and thinned</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Wear light colored clothing so ticks can be found easily</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tuck pant legs into socks so ticks stay on the outside of pants</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Conduct tick checks on children and pets every 4 hours</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Keep pets outside from April to September to help keep ticks out of the house</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Apply other repellents containing active ingredients such as DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, Bio-UD, or IR3535 to exposed skin</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ask your veterinarian to recommend tick controls for your pets</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Treat your lawn with an approved pesticide for tick control</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Treat clothes with permethrin (be sure to follow all label precautions)</i>

Ticks and Disease

In any case of suspected tick transmitted disease, consult with a physician.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: A tick needs to be attached for four to six hours in order to transmit RMSF to its human host. The first symptoms noticed are usually severe headache, chills, fever, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and other flu-like symptoms. These first symptoms usually start 2 to 12 days after the tick bite. By the third day after the bite, a red rash develops on the wrists and ankles, in most cases, and often spreads to the entire hand or foot. A blood test is needed to confirm the disease, and early use of antibiotics has a very high rate of cure.

Lyme Disease: Lyme disease initially develops as an oblong rash, usually 2 or more inches in size, with a clear center that develops at the site of the tick bite, although only 70% of people develop this symptom. Lyme disease is rarely transmitted in the first 24 hours. If the tick transmitted Lyme Disease, people usually develop flu-like symptoms such as nausea, headache, fever, and general stiffness of the neck joints. Chronic symptoms of a small percentage of untreated people include arthritis and nervous system complications. Lyme disease is only confirmed by a medical doctor and specialized laboratory tests.

Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis: Ehrlichiosis and Anaplasmosis are tick borne diseases with symptoms that include: fever, headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. Usually, these symptoms occur within 1-2 weeks following a tick bite. Ehrlichiosis is diagnosed by symptoms and can only be confirmed by a medical doctor and specialized laboratory tests.

References:

Anonymous, 2017, *Preventing Tick Borne Diseases in Virginia*, Virginia Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology, Richmond, Virginia: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-epidemiology/tick-borne-disease-prevention-and-control/ehrlichiosis-anaplasmosis/>

Ehrlichiosis CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/ehrlichiosis/>