



TICK TALK



Dog ticks...deer ticks.....Lyme Disease....these are words we have heard nearly every day in the summer. See how much you really know about ticks...are these true or false? (Answers are on the second page. Don't peek!)

- T F 1. Ticks are not insects.**
- T F 2. Ticks feed only on humans.**
- T F 3. Ticks must have blood meals to grow and/or reproduce.**
- T F 4. Dog ticks and "deer ticks" are easy to tell apart.**
- T F 5. The American dog tick is responsible for transmitting Lyme Disease.**
- T F 6. A person who contracts Lyme Disease will always develop a rash in the location where they were bitten.**
- T F 7. Lyme Disease is a treatable illness.**
- T F 8. Dogs and cats can contract Lyme Disease.**
- T F 9. The best way to keep from contracting Lyme Disease is to stay away from the woods and fields all summer.**
- T F 10. The best way to prevent Lyme Disease in Indiana is to get rid of all its wild hosts.**
- T F 11. The best way to remove a tick is to burn it off or to cover it with fingernail polish.**
- T F 12. Ticks have no value in the natural world.**

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TICK TALK ANSWERS



1. **True.** Ticks are mites and are related to the spiders. There are about 300 species of ticks worldwide!
2. **False.** Ticks find many hosts, including birds, mammals, and reptiles. In our area, deer, raccoons, squirrels, mice, dogs, cats, and many other animals provide free meals for these parasites!
3. **True.** Ticks develop from eggs into larva, then into nymphs, then into adults. The larva, nymphs, and adults all feed on blood. Adult females feed prior to laying a mass of eggs.
4. **True.** The adult dog or wood tick is 1/4-1/2 inch long and is easily detected. The adult deer tick is the size of a poppy seed and is difficult to see unless engorged with blood.
5. **False.** Lyme Disease is usually transmitted by the deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) or the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*). Dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and other "wood ticks" are very common in Indiana and may transmit Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.
6. **False.** A ring-shaped rash develops around the tick bite in about 80% of all cases. The rash may appear within hours or up to a month after the bite (or may never appear.) Other symptoms may include body and muscle aches, fever, chills, and fatigue. Flu-like symptoms also are characteristic of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, but these get progressively worse, and can be followed by a measles-like rash around the joints in later stages of the disease.
7. **True.** Lyme Disease can be treated with antibiotics. The key is early diagnosis. Ignoring symptoms and delaying treatment can complicate recovery or lead to arthritis or heart problems. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever can also be treated with antibiotics in the early stages.
8. **True.** Lameness or fatigue or other behavior changes may indicate illness in your pet. Consult your vet!
9. **False.** There is no reason to stop enjoying the woods because of ticks. Try these precautions instead:
 - a. Wear long pants. Tuck them into your socks to walk in tall grasses or on narrow trails.
 - b. Wear a hat and closed shoes.
 - c. Use a commercial tick repellent on your clothing.
 - d. Check your body and clothing thoroughly when you arrive home. Bathe and wash the clothing.
 - e. Check your pets before they enter the house.
10. **False.** *Ixodes scapularis* and other ticks have many wild hosts. Extensive use of pesticides or extermination of one group of animals would just create a different set of problems. The key is our awareness when in the field!
11. **False.** Ticks have piercing mouthparts with barbs. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it firmly with tweezers, tissue, or gloved hands and tug steadily upward. Do not jerk or twist--the mouthparts may remain in the skin! Wash the tick bite and your hands with warm soapy water. It is a good idea to save for several weeks any tick that has bitten you. Put it in a baby food jar, medicine bottle, etc
12. **False.** Ticks may not be attractive neighbors for man, but they provide food for wrens and other birds that feed on insects and spiders!