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Your Ultimate Guide to Keeping Ticks and Mosquitoes at Bay

By Mark Harris

Whether you are camping, hiking, or simply making the most of your backyard, summer is prime outdoors season. Everyone likes enjoying the good weather and getting some fresh air, but going into nature can also come with annoying - and potentially dangerous - side effects.

Mosquitoes and ticks are two of the biggest pests of the season. Before you head outside, make sure you take the time to learn about all the ways you can prevent being harmed or inconvenienced by these bloodsucking little guys.

The Dangers

According to CNN, diseases from mosquito and tick bites tripled between [2004 and 2018](#). Indeed, the bites can be itchy, painful, and annoying, but the dangers go way beyond mere inconvenience.

The biggest risk of being bitten by a tick is, of course, Lyme disease. When identified quickly, Lyme disease causes flu-like symptoms and can be treated with antibiotics. However, if it is left untreated for over 30 days, it can become a chronic problem. [Common symptoms](#) include extreme sensitivity and nerve pain, numbness in the limbs, headaches, arthritis, and facial palsy. It is a serious disease, so every precaution should be taken to both prevent tick bites and quickly identify them when they happen.

Mosquitoes are associated with [various diseases](#), including malaria, dengue fever, and West Nile virus. These diseases usually first manifest themselves with flu-like symptoms of fever, fatigue, and headaches. They are especially common in certain parts of Asia, Africa, and South America, so make sure to check the [CDC travel health notices](#) when planning a trip abroad to see what precautions you need to take.

Prevention Methods

Using an insect repellent with DEET is the simplest prevention method, but it's not always ideal. Not only can you sweat it off, but it smells and is not very eco-friendly. Instead, focus on [natural methods](#) to prevent bites, like wearing protective clothing, staying dry, and doing regular tick checks. For mosquitoes, nets are incredibly effective.

Many people (wrongly) assume that ticks are only a danger when in the middle of the woods. However, there are [many places](#) where they could be hiding in your yard, from your kids' jungle gym to the driveway. Essentially, if your yard has a wooded or bushy section, you need to practice tick prevention at home.

It can help significantly to make wooded or bushy areas less accessible for kids and pets. You can do this by keeping everything trimmed and tidy. and by putting down mulch or stones. If your garden needs some serious TLC and a little more direction, a [gardening expert](#) can help determine where to add plants and what plants to take out, and how to make your garden less inhabitable for mosquitoes and ticks.

What To Do If You Are Bitten

If you realize you have been bitten by a tick, act fast. [Removing a tick](#) is not difficult, but you need to be careful to make sure you don't leave the head behind. Use a pair of tweezers to grab the tick as close to the skin as possible, and pull away in one swift motion.

If a pet gets bitten by a tick, you can remove it using the same technique. However, if it is your first time dealing with a tick, [experts recommend](#) you take your pet to the vet to do the removal. Similarly, if you remove the tick but suspect the head could still be attached to the skin, go to the vet. You should also get into the habit of doing regular tick checks on your dog.

Mosquito bites are less urgent, but keep an eye out for the flu-like symptoms described above. Meanwhile, you can use [natural remedies](#) such as ice, aloe vera, and apple cider vinegar to soothe the itch.

Diseases from tick and mosquito bites are serious business, but that doesn't mean you should panic or lock the whole family indoors. It is possible to fully enjoy an active summer outdoors while staying safe. All it takes is for you to be informed and prepared, so you can prevent the nasty bites and know exactly what to do when they happen.