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### **How can I prevent diseases spread by ticks?**

Ticks generally cling to plants near the ground in brushy, wooded, or grassy places. The edges of woodlands and leaf litter are high risk areas. The ticks, which cannot jump or fly, climb onto animals and people who brush against the plants.

**If you cannot avoid areas likely to have ticks, the most important thing you can do to reduce your chances of getting sick is to check your entire body for ticks after returning indoors and to remove any attached tick as soon as possible.** Pay particular attention to areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears. Review the MDPH to see what ticks look like.

Apply repellents that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or permethrin before you go outside to reduce the risk of tick bites. DEET is safe and effective in repelling ticks when used according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Choose a product that will provide sufficient protection for the amount of time you plan to spend outdoors. Product labels often indicate the length of time that someone can expect protection from a product. Repellents should not be used on children less than two months of age.

Permethrin-containing products kill ticks but are not designed to be applied to the skin. Clothing should be treated and allowed to dry in a well-ventilated area prior to wearing. Because permethrin binds very tightly to fabrics, once the fabric is dry, very little of the permethrin gets onto the skin.

You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by keeping your grass cut short and clearing brush. For more tips on preventing tick bites and reducing the number of ticks around your home.

*From MassDPH website 2012*