

# Tick season has arrived in the South. How to avoid bites and what to watch out for

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It's tick season in the South, so you may want to be on the lookout.

Though people can encounter ticks throughout the year, the tiny critters

are more active from April to September. For example, in North Carolina, [tick bites](#) become more likely starting in the late spring, Wake County said on its website.

Health experts say it's important to avoid exposure to ticks because they can carry diseases that pose serious risks to humans.

Here are tips for staying safe and warning signs to watch for.

## **How can you avoid bites?**

Of the [tick species](#) that bite humans, four are found throughout the Southeast, including in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. A fifth species lives along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico, McClatchy News reported.

"Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or [wooded areas](#), or even on animals," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on its website.

"Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks."

But if you want to bask in warm-weather activities, here are steps the CDC and the N.C. Cooperative Extension say you can take to try staying out of harm's way:

- Walk in the middle of paths and steer clear of areas with high grasses or heavy leaf cover.
- Use products that have permethrin on your clothes. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has an online tool that lets you search for repellents.
- Wear light-colored clothes in layers and tuck your pants into your socks when possible.

- Slide a white cloth over plants to check for ticks before choosing a camping spot.

## What if you're exposed?

When you come home from a place where ticks may live, experts recommend taking a shower. You also might want to examine your body and clothes for the seed-sized creatures.

"Remove the attached tick as soon as you notice it," the CDC said on its website. "Grasp the tick with tweezers, as close to the skin as possible, and pull it straight out."

It's also recommended to watch for signs that something could be wrong, including rashes, fever and flu-like symptoms. Lyme disease, the most common sickness of its type in the United States, "is rarely life-threatening" but waiting to get treated can lead to more serious consequences, according to health officials.

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