

How to Choose Tick-Control Products

Serious diseases, including Lyme disease, can be carried by ticks. Once you've taken the recommended steps to identify tick-infested areas and reduce likely habitat around your property, you may decide to use control products to further reduce your risk of tick bites. Here are a few tips to help you select the most appropriate products.

Two types of tick-control products with different uses

- **Repellents**—products to keep ticks off humans
 - Apply directly to skin only if directed. Some repellents can only be used on clothing.
 - Repeat applications as directed.
- **Insecticides**—products that kill or repel ticks
 - **Products for use in outdoor areas:** Apply product to areas where ticks lay eggs and are most commonly found. For example: dense vegetation low to ground, areas with accumulated leaves, and other areas frequented by deer, squirrels, mice, and songbirds. Mowed lawns are not good tick habitat.
 - **Products for use on pets:** These products include insecticidal shampoos, dips, collars, and “spot-on products.” Do not use a product labeled for a cat on a dog or a product labeled for a dog on a cat. Do not use a product for a large animal on a smaller animal or a product for a smaller animal on a larger animal.

Do not use insecticides on human skin or clothing.

Read and follow all the label directions

- Bring your reading glasses with you to the store, because you'll need to read the product labels.
- Read the entire label and make sure that ticks are listed.
- Use EPA-registered tick products (have an EPA Reg. No. on the label) designed for what you want to do (*see above*). Note where the EPA Reg. No. is located on the label. This is like a Social Security number for the product. If you need more information quickly it will get you product-specific information from the manufacturer, the Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC), and/or the Northern New England Poison Center.
- Products with “**CAUTION**” on the label have lower risk and fewer personal protective equipment requirements (gloves, safety glasses, or masks, etc.) than those marked “**WARNING**” or “**DANGER**”.
- Be sure that you have the right equipment, including personal protective equipment for applying the product, and that you know how to use the equipment properly.
- If protective clothing and/or personal protective equipment is listed on the label, be sure to wear it when mixing **and** applying the product.

Other considerations

If you've had an allergic reaction to a repellent, *try a different type of product*. If you have asthma or other breathing problems, *avoid aerosols*.

Most pesticide poisoning in the home occurs when children access stored pesticide products. To reduce that potential, and to improve overall control, hire a licensed commercial applicator to help manage ticks.

Contact the BPC for a list of licensed pesticide applicators.

For more information

Exposures or Poisonings: Northern New England Poison Center—800-222-1222 or <http://www.nnepc.org/>

Pesticides: Maine Board of Pesticides Control—207-287-2731 or <http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org>