



# Mosquito & Vector Control

July 2016  
Volume 6, Issue 2

## Ticks an Uninvited Summer Guest



With summer in full swing, many of us spend the majority of our time participating in outdoor activities. While we are enjoying these outdoor activities, ticks can become an unwelcomed guest. There are many different species (kinds) of ticks in the world. The specimen pictured is a western black-legged tick. This species of tick is common in California and is known to spread certain diseases such as Lyme disease. Ticks are small Arachnids (a kind of animal that has eight legs and a body formed of two parts) which require a blood meal to complete their lifecycle.

Ticks bite many different animals (including people), and the animal they bite is called the host. Both males and females feed on blood;

however, the female takes in the largest amount of blood, which is used to nourish eggs (sometimes over 1,000!). After taking her blood meal, the female drops off from the host and deposits her eggs on the ground. Ticks are often found in places where people hike, play, work or live. Adult ticks wait on vegetation to bite a large animal that passes by, including people, dogs, horses, and leaf litter. If you plan on visiting tick habitat, there are things you can do before, during and after your visit to protect yourself from ticks:

- Wear Light colored clothing.
- Wear Long sleeves and pants instead of shorts and short sleeves.
- Use an insect repellent made specifically for ticks.
- If you are hiking, stay in the center of the trail whenever possible!
- Check yourself and the people you are with often for ticks.
- Check your clothes for ticks which could be hiding in clothing, you don't want to bring them inside.
- Take a shower! Showering is a good way to check your entire body for any unwanted 8-legged "hitch hikers".

Even if you are careful when you visit a tick habitat, there is still a chance that you may be bitten by a tick; if this happens don't panic. Follow these steps to remove a tick:

- Grasp the tick with tweezers or a tissue as close to your skin as possible (never with your bare hands).
- Firmly pull the tick from the skin; do not jerk, twist or unscrew the tick.
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE BY BURNING THE TICK, OR BY APPLYING VASELINE.**
- Wash your hands and the bite site with soap and water after removing the tick, and apply an antiseptic to the bite site.

Consult your physician if the tick cannot be removed, part of it is left in the skin, or if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms within 30 days of the tick bite. Learn more information about ticks from the [CDC's website](#).

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## Lyme disease

Lyme disease was named after Old Lyme, Connecticut. The first case of Lyme disease was reported in California in 1978, and is the most common tick-borne disease in California, and the United States. Lyme disease is a preventable bacterial disease that is transmitted to humans and animals from the bite of the infected western black-legged tick. The adult female tick is reddish brown with black legs, and about a 1/8 inch long; males are smaller and entirely brownish-black. Ticks that are in the immature life stages can be as small as the head of a pin.



Typical symptoms of Lyme disease may include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic rash called erythema migrans (also known as the "bull's-eye" rash). If Lyme disease is left untreated, the infection can spread to the joints, heart, and the nervous system. Your physician will diagnose Lyme disease based on physical symptoms (i.e. rash, tick bite), and laboratory testing. Lyme disease can be cured by early diagnosis and proper antibiotic treatment, but it may persist in the human body for years if not properly treated. To avoid Lyme disease, follow the procedures in the above article. Learn more information about [Lyme disease](#).

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## Mosquito Fish



The Division of Environmental Health Services, Mosquito Vector Control (MVC) is offering FREE mosquito fish to all County residents within MVC's jurisdiction. These mosquito fish are to be used on private property to reduce the potential for mosquito breeding. One request may be made per year for each household. A valid form of California identification, a utility bill or other official document indicating residence is required to verify jurisdictional residence.

Enter your zip code [here](#) to determine if you are within MVC's jurisdiction. To receive mosquito fish, visit the MVC office during regular business hours at 248 South Sierra Way, Unit E, San Bernardino, CA 92408 and complete a Mosquito Fish Request form. Learn more about [mosquito fish](#).

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*If you have any questions or comments, please contact Scott Stanley, Health Education Specialist II at 800-442-2283 or [Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov).*

**We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.**