

Tick Safety

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will learn how to manage their exposure to tick bites during outdoor education activities keeping themselves safe from potential Tick borne illnesses.

Overall and Specific Expectations

- A1: A1.6
- B3: B3.1
- D1: Gr. 8 – D1.2
- D2: Gr. 3 – D2.2, Gr. 4 – D2.2, Gr. 8 – D2.2
- D3: Gr. 1 - D3.1, Gr. 6 - D3.2

Learning Goals

- I can behave responsibly and apply appropriate safety rules and procedures that maximize my safety and that of others during outdoor education activities.
- I can think critically to analyze situations, evaluate my choices and make safe decisions in a variety of situations.

Materials

- Picture of a tick (optional)

- [Student Resource: Tick Safety - Exit Card](#)
- [Student Resource: Tick Safety - Self-Check \(primary\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Tick Safety - Self-Check \(junior\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Tick Safety - Self-Check \(intermediate\)](#)

Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

Activities

- [Backpacking/Hiking](#)
- [Orienteering](#)

Tools and Resources

- [Disability-Centred Safety](#)
- [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)
- [Sample Curricular Medical Information and Acknowledgement of Elements of Risk Form](#)

Other

[Risk Management](#)

Assessment for Learning

At the beginning of the lesson, work with students to co-create criteria for assessing knowledge and skills needed to apply safety rules and procedures to avoid illness during outdoor education activities. For example, success criteria might include:

- I can identify what a tick looks like.
- I can identify the typical habitats that ticks in Ontario like to live in.
- I can explain the best practices to follow to reduce the risk of getting a tick bite when participating in outdoor education activities.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and have them complete the *Student Resource: Tick Safety - Self-Check* and the *Student Resource: Tick Safety - Exit Card*.

Collect and review the *Student Resource: Tick Safety - Exit Cards*. Use the co-created criteria to evaluate student learning and offer feedback. If needed, provide feedback to individual students or the entire group, to clarify or reinforce their understanding of safety with respect to ticks, and answer any remaining questions.

Minds On

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Show students a picture of a tick and ask them if they can identify why it is important to know about it.

Explain to students that in Ontario they are fortunate to have a lot of natural space, including parks and forests that provide everyone with an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. However, they need to be aware of insects around them, particularly ticks because some types of ticks carry Lyme disease. Lyme disease is spread to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (also known as Deer Ticks). If they come into contact with a tick and it remains on their skin for more than 24 hours, they may be in danger of contracting Lyme disease. They need to plan how to protect themselves from ticks, especially when they are in areas that are wooded or have tall grasses, bushes, and shrubs during the spring, summer and fall especially, as well as in winter. (Paragraph: Ontario Park, 2026)

Action

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Explain to students that many people believe that ticks are found only in woods. However, they can also be found in many places such as:

- Wooded areas
- Where woods and grassy areas meet
- In tall shrubs, bushes, and grasses

- Under leaves
- In cut grass or sports fields (in small numbers)
- Under groundcover plants in yards
- Around rock or wood walls where mice and other small mammals live
- In areas of damp, rotting wood

Tell students that the class is going on an imaginary hiking trip in the woods near the school. Have students generate and share ideas of things they can do to prevent being bitten by ticks on the hike and what they think they should do if they find one on their body. Share the tick bite prevention tips and actions that an adult can take to help them if they find a tick on their body.

Methods for preventing tick bites and Lyme Disease:

- Wear light-coloured clothing. This discourages ticks from attaching to you, and it makes them easier to spot if they do get on you.
- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and close-toed shoes. Tuck your shirt into your pants. You can also tuck your pant legs into your socks.
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin (follow manufacturer's instructions) on your clothes and any exposed skin.
- Stay on pathways or in the middle of trails.
- Check your clothing and body at least once a day for ticks. Pay particular attention to the areas of the groin, navel, armpits, scalp, behind the knees, and behind the ears.
- Use a mirror to examine the back of your body, or ask someone else to do so.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after being outdoors. This allows you to more easily find and wash off any ticks crawling on you.
- Put outdoor clothing in the dryer for 60 minutes on high heat before washing them. This kills any ticks which are often difficult to see and thrive in wet environments.

If you find a tick on you, tell an adult right away who can remove it for you. To remove a tick they should:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grab the tick as close to the skin it is attached to as possible.

- Slowly pull on the tick with even pressure, in one smooth motion, so that the mouth is removed and the body isn't crushed.
- Wash the area with soap and warm water.
- Put the tick in a sealed plastic bag or a container with a lid.
- Bring the tick to your local Health Unit office to have it identified.
- Consult with a healthcare provider within the next 24 hours.

What **not** to do:

- Do not grab, squeeze, or pop the tick around its swollen abdomen.
- Do not use a match, heat, or chemical products to try to remove a tick.
- Do not twist the tick when pulling it out.

(Information on Ticks: Ontario Park, 2026)

Consolidation

Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Divide students into pairs to complete the *Student Resource: Tick Safety - Self-Check*. Have students complete the *Student Resource: Tick Safety - Exit Card* to identify different areas around the school or in their neighbourhood where ticks might be found, and precautions they can take to prevent tick bites when participating in outdoor education activities in the community or when on an outdoor trip with their family.

Notes to Teachers

Remember to check school board policies and procedures applicable to any outdoor education activity.

A variety of assessment strategies have been identified in the Assessing for Learning section of each activity. Please note that these assessment strategies have been provided as a means for teachers to gather information to determine what students already know and can do, to inform instruction, scaffold learning, differentiate instruction in response to their students needs, and help students keep track of their progress in achieving the learning goals. These are not meant to be used for formal assessment and evaluation purposes.

Reference

Ontario Park. (2026). [How to protect yourself from ticks.](#)