Tick Removal

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

To remove an attached tick, use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers or special tick removal instruments. These special devices allow one to remove the tick without squeezing the tick body. This is important, as you do not want to crush the tick and force harmful bacteria to leave the tick and enter the dog's bloodstream.

1. Grab the tick by the head or mouth parts right where they enter the skin. Do not grasp the tick by the body.
2. Without jerking, pull firmly and steadily directly outward. Do not twist the tick as you are pulling.
3. Using methods such as applying petroleum jelly, a hot match, or alcohol will NOT cause the tick to 'back out,' In fact, these irritants may cause the tick to deposit more disease-carrying saliva in the wound.
4. After removing the tick, place it in a jar of alcohol to kill it. Ticks are NOT killed by flushing them down the toilet.
5. Clean the bite wound with a disinfectant. If you want to, apply a small amount of a triple antibiotic ointment.
6. Wash your hands thoroughly.

Please do not use your fingers to remove or dispose of the tick. We do not want you in contact with a potentially disease-carrying tick. Do NOT squash the tick with your fingers. The contents of the tick can transmit disease.

Once an embedded tick is manually removed, it is not uncommon for a welt and skin reaction to occur. A little hydrocortisone spray will help alleviate the irritation, but it may take a week or more for healing to take place. In some cases, the tick bite may permanently scar leaving a hairless area. This skin irritation is due to the irritating and destructive tick saliva. It is not due to the tick losing its head, literally. Do not be worried about the tick head staying in; it rarely happens. This skin irritation is due to a reaction to the tick saliva.

See our Video on How to Remove a Tick for more help.

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