

Healthy Colorado Schools



SEPTEMBER TIP OF THE MONTH: TICKS

If you've been spending time outdoors, especially around grasses and low-growing plants, check yourself for ticks! Ticks are arachnids (related to spiders) that feed on the blood of animals. They are found throughout Colorado, commonly at higher elevations and are most active during the summer months. Rocky Mountain wood tick (*Dermacentor andersoni*) and American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) are the most common ticks associated with people in the state. These ticks usually are found on grasses and low plants, waiting to attach to a host. They don't fall from trees, jump or fly!

Keep ticks off by wearing protective clothing. Long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other clothing can help exclude ticks or keep them from attaching to the skin. Insect repellent also can be used.

A thorough "tick check" can be an effective alternative to repellents. After walking through areas where ticks might be present, carefully look for and remove any ticks you may have picked up. Ticks take several hours to settle and begin feeding. This gives you time to find and remove them.

If you find a tick, remove it by grasping it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward and don't twist or jerk the tick. After removing, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

Two insect repellants are effective – products with permethrin, which is used only to treat clothing, and DEET, which is applied to skin that is not covered by clothing. Take precautions when using any insecticide. Do not apply DEET to hands or other areas that may come into contact with the mouth. After use, wash or bathe treated areas.

Keep Colorado schools pest free