

Tips from the Old Scout

Tip # 1: Ticks and Insects

Tips from the Old Scout is a series of informational articles that will appear on the Troop 201 website each month. They are intended to be an information source for both parents and scouts on a variety of important topics relating to camping, backpacking and hiking.

The subject is ticks and other insects. Ticks are prevalent in every area we camp or hike, in every season of the year. Our primary concern is the tiny deer tick -they can transmit Lyme disease and a host of other diseases that can affect one's health for years. It is important to learn how to identify, avoid, and if necessary remove ticks to prevent disease (see photos).

In addition to ticks, mosquitoes and flies are a nuisance. Some scouts have had success with bug repellent wrist bands. Most sprays and creams containing DEET are effective. Some sunscreens also contain insect repellent. The scout must apply these often for the repellent to be effective.

If a scout is known to have allergic reactions to any kind of bite or bee sting, it is important to include this information on outing permission forms, and to make sure the adult leaders are aware of it. Likewise, any scout carrying an EPI-pen for this reason should notify the adult leaders.

Scouts are taught the best way to remove a bee stinger is to scrape it with a hard-edged object like a credit card or knife blade against the direction the stinger is inserted – removing it the way it entered the skin. To remove a tick, use a lever tool that is made for this purpose to gently back out the tick, or use pointed tweezers to grab the tick gently behind the head and slowly back it out. It is important to remove the tick intact and not leave any broken off body parts in the wound. All bite sites should be washed, treated with an antiseptic and covered. (There are many YouTube videos online demonstrating the proper way to remove a tick.)

In the case of ticks, the bite area should be checked frequently to see if a bulls-eye rash develops – a sign that an infection may have occurred. Most experts say that a tick needs to be attached for 36-48 hours to transmit disease to the human host. Seek medical attention if rash, fever or other flu-like symptoms occur.

The Old Scout love the old wife, but do not use old wives remedies like burning the tick with a hot match stick, or covering it with Vaseline jelly. The object is to gently remove the tick, not too anger it into releasing poisons into your body.

Scout should avoid walking through tall grass, or sitting or lying in the leaf litter where ticks hang out. A substance called permethrin is available in pump spray bottles at all the local outdoor sports stores. This

product should not be sprayed on the skin, but should be used to pre-treat all clothing and gear before going out into the woods. The Old Scout has not had a problem with ticks since beginning to use permethrin several years ago.

Scouts should check themselves for ticks each day in camp, and again after returning home – especially the back, underarms, and groin area. Parents should assist in checking the scalp.

Remember:

- Never spray insect repellent in or near tents – it will remove the water-resistance of the tent fabric
- Never burn incense or insect repellent “coils” in or near tents – it is a fire hazard.
- Use insect repellent with DEET to repel insects. Only pump spray bottles are allowed in scout camp – **No** aerosols
- Use permethrin to pre-treat clothing and gear prior to outings to prevent ticks from crawling onto you
- Always check your body for ticks after an outing



