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TITLE: TICK SEASON IS HERE!

BY: RICKY ENSLEY, POLK COUNTY EXTENSION COORDINATOR

POLK COUNTY EXTENSION, 20 N. MAIN STREET, CEDARTOWN

770-749-2142

uge2233@uga.edu

It is important to know about ticks for several reasons. They carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and can cause further infection if their mouthparts break off when the ticks are removed.

The three species of ticks occurring throughout Georgia that commonly feed on man are the lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), and black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*).

The lone star tick has unusually long mouthparts. The female has a single white spot in the middle of her back, while the white markings on the male are diffuse. Common large hosts are livestock, dogs, deer, and man, as well as smaller hosts such as birds and rodents.

The American dog tick has shorter mouthparts. Both the male and female have diffuse white markings on the back. The dog is the preferred host, but the tick will feed on a variety of large animals, including man.

The black-legged tick is smaller than the other two ticks and has no white markings on the back. This tick is common on white-tailed deer, dogs, birds, man, and other large mammals, plus a variety of small rodents.

The best way to avoid tick bites when on wooded trails, in high grass, or brush areas are to take personal precautions.

- Wear long pants, tuck the pant leg into your socks and tuck your shirt under your belt. The tick will move up towards the head where detection is easier.
- Use a repellent. A repellent containing “deet” is available in many brands. “Deet” in aerosols can usually be sprayed on clothing. Permanone, containing permethrin, comes only as an aerosol and is sprayed on the clothing only.
- Check yourself for ticks at least twice a day.

- Remove imbedded ticks with forceps or cloth or paper wrapped around the tick as near to the point of attachment as possible. Use a firm steady pull. Do not jerk or twist because you may break off the mouthparts and get the site infected. Do not use unprotected fingers. A disinfectant should be applied to the site.
- Around your home you can treat your dog with an approved pesticide for ticks, keep the grass cut short, fence the yard to keep other dogs that bring ticks in and use a pesticide in the yard as needed to reduce tick populations.

Polk County is blessed with outdoor recreation areas that its citizens should continue to enjoy. Taking a few precautions and being aware of the symptoms of Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever should give you good protection against ticks.