# TICKS IN THE BUSH

Ticks live anywhere, not just in bushland, and are active all year round, but mostly populate the east coastal areas of Australia. Bushwalkers in the Field of Mars Reserve have reported discovering ticks on themselves, We advise sensible precautions including the use of insect repellent. At the Visitor Centre we have information leaflets and first aid equipment. For more information, see https://www.allergy.org.au/images/pc/ASCIA_PC_Tick_Allergy_2024.pdf

**SENSIBLE PRECAUTIONS**

Before any outdoor activity, especially where your body may contact grass or bushes, be sensibly dressed and treat both clothing and exposed skin areas with an effective insect repellant. Shower afterwards.

Be aware that tick bites are painless at first, but as soon as you suspect you have a tick on you, it is important to follow the following advice…

**HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE A TICK**

When removing ticks, it is important that ticks are not removed or touched. A disturbed tick may inject more tick saliva into the body of the patient.

**" FREEZE IT, DON'T SQUEEZE IT! "**

Ether sprays* freeze and kill the tick.

If you do not have ether-containing spray, seek medical help to remove the tick.

1. Take the ether-containing spray and place it about 1 cm above the tick.
2. Using the ether-containing spray, spray the tick 5 times.
3. After a few minutes, if you have a magnifying glass, check if the tick is still moving its legs. If the tick has stopped moving, it is dead.
4. If you don't have a magnifying glass or if the tick is not dead, spray the tick 5 times again. The dead tick should drop off.
5. If the tick does not drop off, have it safely removed by a health professional using fine-tipped forceps. Do not use household tweezers to remove the tick, as this will cause it to squeeze allergen-containing saliva into your body, even if the tick is dead.
6. If the patient has a tick allergy, follow the instructions on their ASCIA Action Plan.

**PETS AND OTHER ANIMALS**

Australian native animals are not severely affected by tick bites so, if you see one with ticks on it, your best action is to leave it alone. If in doubt, contact

- Sydney Wildlife Rescue (02)94134300 or
- WIRES 1300 094 737.

Non-native animals ARE affected by tick bites, often fatally. Keep pets away from places where they may come into contact with ticks and, if you suspect your pet cat or dog has been bitten, take it immediately to a vet.

** Medi Freeze Tick Off or Wart-Off Freeze are types of ether-containing sprays. These, and other brands of ether-containing sprays can be purchased over the counter from your local pharmacy.*

## ADVICE FROM NSW HEALTH

See https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/

People living in tick-infected areas should:

- mow grass in the backyard and keep mulch and leaf litter away from the main entrance to the house, and
- trim shrubs overhanging paths and play areas.

The risk of tick bites (and so of Lyme disease) is greatest in late spring, summer and early autumn. This is when the nymph ticks are more abundant and when people visit habitats where ticks live such as forests and other densely vegetated areas, especially areas with high grass and lots of leaf litter. Lyme disease is more likely to affect people participating in outdoor activities such as hiking or mountain biking in tick-infested areas.