

How to Prepare for Learning in the Outdoors...

Learning in nature's classroom is exciting, rewarding, and memorable. Beauty and fresh air abound. However, there are a few things to prepare for before setting out on an outdoor field trip.

1. Weather - **Being prepared for the weather is the key to an enjoyable outdoor experience.** Before getting dressed, check the weather forecast for the entire day and plan accordingly. If there is a chance of rain, bring rain gear!
2. Temperature - Keep in mind that the temperature in your backyard is much warmer than on or near the water or in an open, windy field. Everyone should wear or bring **layers of light colored clothing** to adjust to temperature and wind changes throughout the day.

Cold weather suggestion: long underwear, pants, t-shirt, long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt, water proof jacket, boots, and a hat for warmth. Note: approximately 80% of our body heat is lost through an uncovered head.

Warm weather suggestion: pants, t-shirt, sweatshirt, closed toe shoes, hat with visor, SPF 30+ sun block (apply at home). Shorts may be worn in hot weather. **Be sure to bring a water bottle** to stay hydrated!

3. Plants to learn about and avoid –
 - a. Poison Ivy – Participants will be taught to identify poison ivy from a distance. The oil from the plant can cause a rash on the skin. Pets can carry this oil on their fur if they run through it. It is always good to wash hands with warm water and soap if you think you have accidentally come in contact with this plant.
4. Insects that sting or bite –
 - a. Insect repellent – Is not recommended on the field trip, but should be applied at home, prior to the trip if you wish to use it.
 - b. Bees, wasps – are a very important part of the environment. They transfer pollen which allows plants to reproduce. Avoid wearing perfume and scented hairsprays as they attract bees. Also, avoid bringing sweet drinks and desserts for lunch.
 - c. Ticks

Ticks are found on Long Island. All students and adults participating in Nassau BOCES Outdoor and Environmental Education programs are made aware of precautions that they can take to reduce the incidence of contact with ticks at any outdoor location, including backyards. **We recommend tucking light colored pants into white socks to keep ticks outside the clothing.** Ticks are dark brown or reddish and can be easily seen on light colored clothing.

In addition, our groups stay clear of known tick areas and program participants are visually checked individually during and at the end of the programs. These checks are conducted by a naturalist who examines the front and back of clothing from shoes to shirt (jacket), and as participants lift long hair, we check the head, neck, behind the ears, and along the hairline. Participants are encouraged to do a thorough check under their clothing at home, and young children should be checked by a parent.

Nassau BOCES Outdoor and Environmental Education Program Tick Information from the NYS and Nassau County Departments of Health

All outdoor programs conducted by Nassau BOCES Naturalists at Long Island parks and beaches include visual checks for the presence of ticks. Participants are encouraged to do a thorough check under their clothing at home, and young children should be checked by a parent.

This information is being provided to increase awareness and minimize some of the myths surrounding ticks. For more information contact the Nassau County Department of Health at nhealthdept@nassaucountyny.gov or 516-571-2006.

General tick information

- Ticks are found everywhere on Long Island; including school yards and backyards.
- Ticks are small (poppy seed size to ½ inch), spider-like organisms which live in shady, moist areas at ground level. They will cling to tall grass, brush and shrubs usually no more than 18-24” off the ground.
- They also live in gardens and lawns, especially at the edge of woods and around stone walls.
- They do not jump, fly or drop from trees. They get on animals and humans only by direct contact and then crawl upward to find a protected area to feed on blood.
- They can be active any time the temperature is above freezing.

Lyme disease

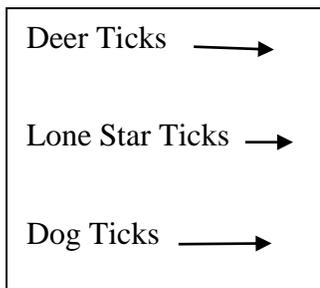
- Lyme disease is carried by Deer Ticks, but not all Deer Ticks are infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.
- In most cases the tick must be attached for **36** hours or more before the bacteria can be transmitted.
- In 60-80% of cases, a rash resembling a bull’s eye or solid patch, about 2” in diameter appears near the site of the bite.
- Early symptoms include: chills, fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, muscle and joint pain, and swollen glands.
- Symptoms appear within 3-30 days after the bite from an infected tick.
- Early treatment involves antibiotics and almost always results in a full cure.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF)

- RMSF is a serious tick-borne disease caused by a rickettsia (differs from bacteria and virus). It is carried by the American Dog Tick and fewer than 50 cases are reported annually in NY.
- Symptoms include a sudden onset of moderate to high fever (which can last for two or three weeks), severe headache, fatigue, deep muscle pain, chills and rash and should be treated with antibiotics early. Symptoms usually appear within two weeks of an infected tick bite

How to remove a tick

- Remove the tick promptly by grasping it with tweezers close to the skin.
- Gently pull the tick in a steady, upward motion and save it in a plastic bag for identification.
- Wash the area with a disinfectant and notify your doctor immediately (note date and location of bite).
- If the mouthparts break off and remain in your skin, don’t worry. They cannot transmit Lyme disease because the infected body is no longer attached. The parts will dry up and fall off in a few days.



Deer Ticks



Dog Tick

OEE/How to

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Tick Stages