

Powassan Encephalitis

Fact Sheet



Powassan encephalitis is a rare illness caused by a virus. It is spread by the bite of an infected *Ixodes* tick.



Anyone can get Powassan, but people who spend time outdoors are at the highest risk.

Signs and Symptoms



Fever



Headache



Neck Pain



Weakness



Confusion



Speech Difficulties

Signs and symptoms usually start one week to one month after being bitten by an infected tick. Signs and symptoms can also include loss of coordination and seizures. Many people with Powassan do not develop any symptoms. Powassan can cause swelling of the brain and surrounding area. About half of survivors have permanent brain damage and about one out of every ten cases end in death.



Talk to your doctor if you have any of these signs or symptoms after being bitten by a tick. Powassan is diagnosed based on signs and symptoms and confirmed through spinal fluid or blood tests. There is no specific treatment for Powassan and severe illness may include supportive treatment in the hospital.

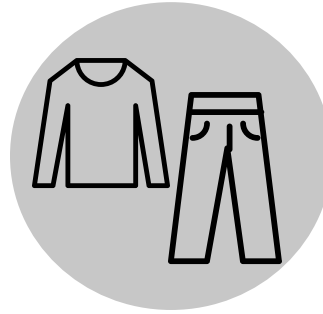
Prevent Powassan Encephalitis

The best way to prevent Powassan is to protect yourself and your family from tick bites.



Use an EPA-approved repellent for use on skin such as:

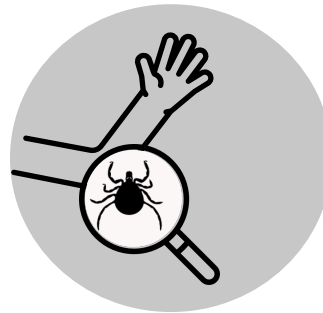
- DEET
- Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus
- IR 3535
- Picaridin



Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside. Tuck your pants into your socks and your shirt into your pants.



Keep your lawn mowed and rake your leaves.



Do daily tick checks and check your pets too.

Additional prevention methods include using permethrin on clothing.

Safe Tick Removal



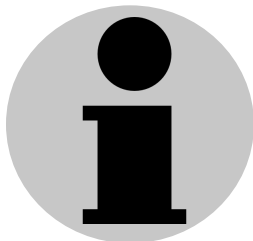
Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers to remove a tick.

-Using tweezers, grab the tick by its mouth and use firm, steady pressure to pull the tick out. Do not use twisting motions.

-Using a tick spoon, line the notch of the spoon up with the head of the tick and gently scoop.

Do not use nail polish, matches, or petroleum jelly to remove the tick. These methods increase the risk of localized skin infection.

For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/idepi
2. www.cdc.gov/powassan
3. www.maine.gov/dhhs/tickfaq (For frequently asked tick questions)
4. www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you (For EPA approved repellents)
5. www.ticks.umaine.edu (To submit a tick for identification and testing)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.