

Preventive behaviours regarding tick bites

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LETTERS

TICK BITE PREVENTION AND REMOVAL

Preventive behaviours regarding tick bites

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Due and colleagues provide an insightful overview of tick bite prevention and tick removal.¹ However, we would like to raise three matters related to prevention.

Firstly, preventive strategies include avoidance of tick infested areas, use of protective clothing (such as wearing long sleeved shirts and long trousers), routine body checks for ticks after being outdoors, and the use of tick repellents. Except for body checks, compliance with these measures is low.²

Secondly, each of these behaviours has different determinants. For example, people believe that protective clothing interferes with their enjoyment (for example, wearing long clothes on a hot day), they do not know how to identify ticks, and they do not believe that tick repellents can effectively prevent tick bites.^{2,3} Insight into determinants underlying preventive behaviours is essential for developing effective health education material.

Thirdly, health education materials and prevention research on tick bites currently focus on adults, but children are also vulnerable.⁴ Although parents should check children for ticks, children themselves should also be aware of the need to check. Teaching them to recognise the tiny nymphal stage of ticks and

the features of tick habitats can encourage them to urge parents to do timely body checks. It therefore seems logical to develop health education materials aimed at children as well as parents. Again, insight into the determinants of children's behaviour (such as asking their parents to do a body check) should be used in the development of such materials.⁵

Competing interests: None declared.

Full response at: www.bmj.com/content/347/bmj.f7123/rr/677678.

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