



## TICK BITE PREVENTION

**GEAR UP:** Cover your skin when walking in grassy or wooded areas. Tuck pant legs into socks. Light-colored, protective clothing makes tick identification easier.

**INSECT REPELLENT:** Use repellent with DEET or picaridin.

**CLOTHING:** Treat outdoor clothing with permethrin.

**PETS:** Keep pets on a leash when walking in grassy or wooded environments. Make sure to check them for ticks after being outdoors and use pet-safe tick repellent.

**AFTER BEING OUTDOORS:** Make sure to perform full body tick checks on yourself and family members once inside.

**PROPER REMOVAL:** Remove ticks by using tweezers to gently grasp the tick close to its head or mouth. Be sure to pull cautiously and steadily.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For More Information on AGS

Martha's Vineyard Board of Health

[www.mvboh.org](http://www.mvboh.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/ticks/alpha-gal/](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/alpha-gal/)

Alpha-gal Information (AGI)

[www.alphagalinformation.org](http://www.alphagalinformation.org)



SCAN ME



## THE RED MEAT ALLERGY

ALPHA-GAL SYNDROME ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD



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Photo by Max Bossman

## WHAT IS ALPHA-GAL SYNDROME?

Alpha-gal is a sugar found in most mammals, but humans produce an insignificant amount of alpha-gal. When a tick feeds on a mammal host, like a deer, and later feeds on another, a human, the carrier tick introduces alpha-gal to the body. An antibody response activates to fight against alpha-gal; from then on, we may experience allergic reactions that occur after consuming mammalian products. Known as Alpha-gal Syndrome (AGS), this condition is becoming more common in New England.

## ALPHA-GAL SYNDROME SYMPTOMS

**Allergic reactions to alpha-gal range in severity and usually occur 3-8 hours after consuming mammalian products. These are common symptoms of AGS:**

**SKIN:** ~90% of cases experience irritation or swelling of the hands and feet. Hives are a common symptom.

**ANAPHYLAXIS:** ~60% of cases experience anaphylactic reactions

**GASTROINTESTINAL:** +60% of cases experience abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or heartburn

**CARDIOVASCULAR:** 30-40% of cases experience hypotension, irregular heartbeat, dizziness, or shock

## SOURCES OF ALPHA-GAL

- **MAMMALIAN MEAT:** beef, pork, etc.
- **MAMMALIAN ORGANS:** liver, kidney, etc.
- **DAIRY:** milk, cheese, etc.
- **GELATIN:** cosmetics, candy, etc.
- **MEDICAL TREATMENT:** certain vaccines & medications containing animal byproducts

## TICK ID

The lone star tick is believed to be the main transmitter of AGS in the United States.

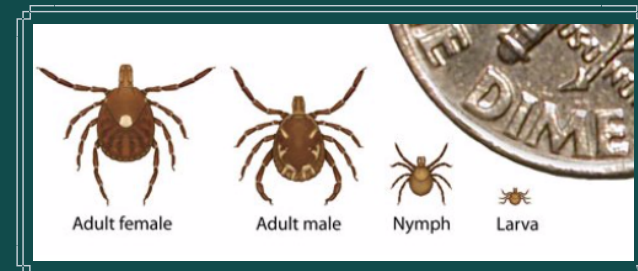


Photo by CDC

### WHAT BITES?

Larvae, nymphs, and adults all bite humans

### WHEN?

April through September in New England

### COLORING

**Adults:** brown body - females have a white spot on the hood

**Nymphs:** light brown body without a white spot

**Larvae:** Translucent

### SIZE

**Unfed adults:** Apple seed

**Nymphs:** Poppy seed

**Larvae:** Pinhead

