

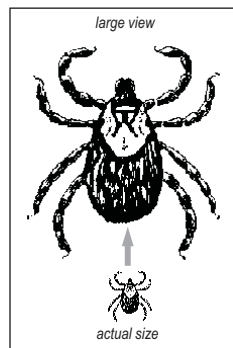
Spider and Tick Safety

If you work outdoors you may come in to contact with spiders and ticks. These are arachnids which have eight legs rather than the six legs of insects. Arachnids are common and rarely cause health problems. Here are a few facts you should know about spiders and ticks.



Wood Ticks

Ticks live in areas frequented by wildlife such as deer and mice. Female ticks require a blood meal before laying eggs so female ticks climb on to shrubs and grasses to latch on to a warm-blooded animal. Ticks are active on warm spring days from February through June. Once a tick is on your clothes it tries to find a place to hide and feed. The head, armpits and groin are common places where ticks will attach. There is little risk of tick-borne disease in the South Okanagan.¹



Rocky Mountain wood tick,
BC Ministry of Agriculture

Preventing tick bites

- Perform a tick check after every day spent outside near natural areas. Carefully run your fingers through your hair as well as checking all over.
- Ticks can live for days in clothes and blankets but not if the clothes are put in a heated clothes dryer.



Removing ticks

- Removing a tick is easy. Grasp it firmly where it is attached and pull out, using tweezers or your fingers. Clean the area with antiseptic.

Watch for symptoms of illness

- After removing an attached tick, monitor the skin for the next few days. If a red ring or any swelling develops around the bite seek medical attention.
- Symptoms to watch for include severe pain at the bite site, fever, headache, abdominal pain, muscle pain or rash.
- Rare cases of tick paralysis are caused by a toxin in tick saliva. The toxin causes leg weakness and paralysis which should be treated immediately.

Spiders

Spiders prey on insects so they are a benefit to agriculture. Spiders do not carry disease but some have venomous bites. Spiders are not aggressive and rarely bite people.

Western Black Widow

- A common spider of the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys
- A shiny, smooth black spider. Females are larger with a red hourglass on the bottom of the abdomen.
- Black Widows weave messy webs and can often be found in rodent holes or dark areas. The Black Widow is a timid spider that stays put on its web during the day. It has small, weak mouthparts and bites to humans are rare. Bites can be venomous so if there is acute pain or muscle cramps at the site of a spider bite consult a doctor.

Some people are extra-sensitive to insect bites. Any insect bite that is followed by severe swelling or pain should be treated.



Other venomous spiders

- The venomous Brown Recluse spider is not found in BC or anywhere in Canada.
- Hobo Spiders are found in southern British Columbia but they are not aggressive and venomous bites are rare.

For more information:

Efauna on BC spiders: www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/spiders
¹ www.bcmj.org BCMJ Vol. 53(3): Prevalence of tick-borne pathogens in the South Okanagan, British Columbia.

Sponsored by:



OKANAGAN
SIMILKAMEEN
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE

