



NORTHWEST OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

VECTOR BORNE DISEASE INFORMATION

In recent times in North America, one risk that we face in the wilderness environment is the transmission of vector-borne illnesses (from mosquito and tick bites). Outward Bound is working hard every day to educate and protect against vector-borne illness transmission. While there is no complete protection from a mosquito or tick bite, or the illnesses they may transmit, whether you are in the wilderness or in your backyard, we hope the information and recommendations below will help you prepare for course.

Prevention

The most important thing you can do to prevent mosquito and tick bites is to prevent them from reaching the skin.

- **Insect repellent:** The [Center for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and State Departments of Health recommend insect repellent with up to 50% DEET. You should include this with your child if it is mentioned on your child's packing list. Insect repellent containing DEET will also be supplied on all courses where there is a significant chance of vector-borne illness transmission.
- **Clothing Treatment:** One method of prevention is to treat all clothes before course with Permethrin - commonly available and safe to use as a fabric application that repels and kills most vectors on contact. You can treat your clothing yourself at home with a spray on solution available from [Sawyer](#) or [Repel](#). Outdoor clothing pre-treated with Permethrin is also available from some companies.
- **Clothing on Course:** Light-colored clothing is recommended, as well as, long-sleeve shirts and trousers if the weather permits.
- **Education on Course:** Outward Bound staff will work with students throughout the course to educate about vector identification and bite prevention and maintain Outward Bound's standards of safety against vector-borne illness.
- **Read more about prevention from the CDC [here](#).**

Upon Returning Home from Course:

- **Do a Tick Check:** Careful checking when you return home is an important step in assuring that you have no embedded ticks on your body.
- **Watch for Sign and Symptoms:** If you find a tick or think you have been bitten by a **tick** on course, pay attention to signs and symptoms. Signs and symptoms can include a red, target-like rash and symptoms resembling the flu: low grade fever, body aches, joint pain, swollen glands.
- **Mosquitos** may also transmit illnesses and you should be aware of signs and symptoms for illnesses such as Zika or West Nile. Quick diagnosis of what seems like normal flu-like symptoms can be essential for quick treatment of more serious illnesses.

If you do find a tick embedded, you should:

1. Use fine, narrow tweezers and grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
2. Apply slow, steady pressure directly away from the skin. Do not twist or jerk the tick.
3. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.
4. For assurance, place the tick in a ziplock bag and put in freezer to keep for analysis if signs and symptoms do occur.



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If the tick is believed to have been embedded more than 24 hours, follow up with a health care provider. Let them know you had an embedded tick and the area in which the expedition occurred. If the tick is not embedded, and still crawling, it can be removed easily by hand and discarded. Ticks should be treated with seriousness and care but should not cause undue concern unless symptoms appear.

Additional information on vectors, vector borne diseases and their prevention can be found on the [CDC](#) and [World Health Organization](#) websites. Consult your doctor promptly if you don't feel well and please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns.

Course Area Specific Information

The links below shows information regarding mosquito and tickborne diseases in our courses areas.

- Oregon Courses - [Oregon state profile](#)
- Washington Courses - [Washington state profile](#)
- Idaho Courses - [Idaho state profile](#)

Additional information on vectors, vector borne diseases and their prevention can be found on the [CDC](#) and [World Health Organization](#) websites. Additionally, consult with your doctor if you have further questions about travel to this course area.