

## **Precautions on the Trail**

*While you shouldn't expect hazardous trail conditions, you need to be prepared and take certain precautions.* Bring a companion along, especially if you're going to an unfamiliar area. Tell someone when you're going and when you expect to be back.

You'll probably come across biting insects during the warmer months, so *use insect repellent and keep your skin covered if possible.* When necessary, cover exposed skin surfaces with a strong sunscreen and bring sufficient water to avoid dehydration.

*Be especially vigilant for ticks,* including the deer ticks that can carry Lyme disease. Ticks are usually picked up when ground vegetation brushes against your legs. Keep your legs and ankles covered, apply insect repellent to clothing below your waist, and tuck your pant legs into your socks when walking through brush and grass. These precautions may keep ticks on the outside of your clothes, where they can be spotted and removed.

*If you're bitten, remove the tick as soon as possible.* It's believed that ticks need to be embedded for 24 hours to transmit Lyme disease. If you find an embedded tick, carefully remove it using tweezers from as near the skin as possible, and save the tick to be tested at your local health department to see if it carries the disease. *Always search your body and scalp for ticks when returning from a walk.* Regular ticks are easy to spot, but deer ticks are only about the size of the period at the end of this sentence.

Don't approach any wild animal too closely and don't feed waterfowl. Also, don't touch the glossy leaves of poison ivy. Remember: "if it has leaves of three, let it be."

No drinking water is provided at the open space areas, so *bring plenty of water* in an unbreakable container. Don't drink from the lakes or streams.

### Distress Signal

In the unlikely event of an emergency, the uniform distress signal in the woods is three audible or visible signs quickly repeated at regular intervals. Shout for help, blow a whistle, or flash a light. Any hiker hearing or seeing such a signal is obligated to respond. Answer a call for help with two signals and promptly search for those in need of help.