

Glossary

Adult: The final stage of a tick's life where it is fully grown.

Arachnid: A group of animals that includes ticks, spiders, and scorpions; they have eight legs and no antennae.

Blood Meal: This is when a tick attaches to an animal or person and drinks their blood so it can grow to its next life stage.

Capitulum: The name for a tick's "head" area, which includes its mouthparts. Ticks have a false head – it is not a real head.

Festoons: Small rectangular notches or bumps that look like a pattern along the back edge of some ticks' bodies.

Germs: Teeny-tiny organisms that some ticks carry in their bodies which can make people or animals sick.

Gogga: A common South African word for a bug or insect.

Host: The person or animal (like a dog, cow, or meerkat) that a tick hitches a ride on to get a blood meal.

Hypostome: A part of the tick's mouth that looks like a tiny, jagged needle; it has hooks to help the tick stay stuck to the skin while it eats.

Larva: A "baby" tick that has hatched from an egg; at this stage, it only has six legs.

Life Cycle: The journey a tick goes through from an egg to a larva, then a nymph, and finally an adult.

Molt (Moult): When a tick sheds its outer "skin" to grow into its next life stage after eating.

Nymph: A "teenage" tick that has eight legs but is not yet a full adult.

Palps: Two parts on the tick's mouth that help it feel its surroundings and find a good spot to bite.

Questing: A behavior where a tick climbs to the top of a blade of grass and stretches out its front legs, waiting to grab onto a passing animal or person.

Scutum: A hard, shield-like plate on the back of a tick's body that protects it.

Tick Bite Fever: A sickness caused by a bacterium, spread by a tick bite; it can cause a high fever and a sore body.

Tweezers: A tool with thin tips used by adults to safely pull a tick straight out of the skin.

Vector: A scientific name for a bug (like a tick) that carries and spreads pathogens to people and other animals.

Veld: Open, grassy or bushy land where ticks often live and wait for hosts.

Veterinarian: A special doctor who takes care of animals and helps keep pets safe from ticks.