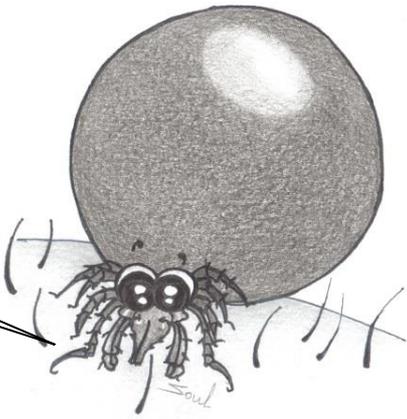


Hello everyone,  
My name is Mađam the tick



If this month I've been chosen to be the star, it is because despite my small size, I can cause a lot of evil ... I am sorry about it but it is unfortunately the truth ... What is more, I've endangered quite a few emulators

« I haven't chosen to be a tick »

<http://www.lanouvellerepublique.fr>

Also called "Ixodida", I represent an order of arachnid acarid. I am a vertebrate's ectoparasite, even of those covered with scales like lizards!

Unlike most other arthropods, my body is not segmented in three but in 2 parts: the anterior part or "capitulum " ("head" in Latin) and the posterior part called " idiosoma ".

I have mouthparts that allow me to cut the skin and anchor. This happens under the effect anesthetics present in my saliva, which makes me less detectable!



<http://img.allodocteurs.fr/>

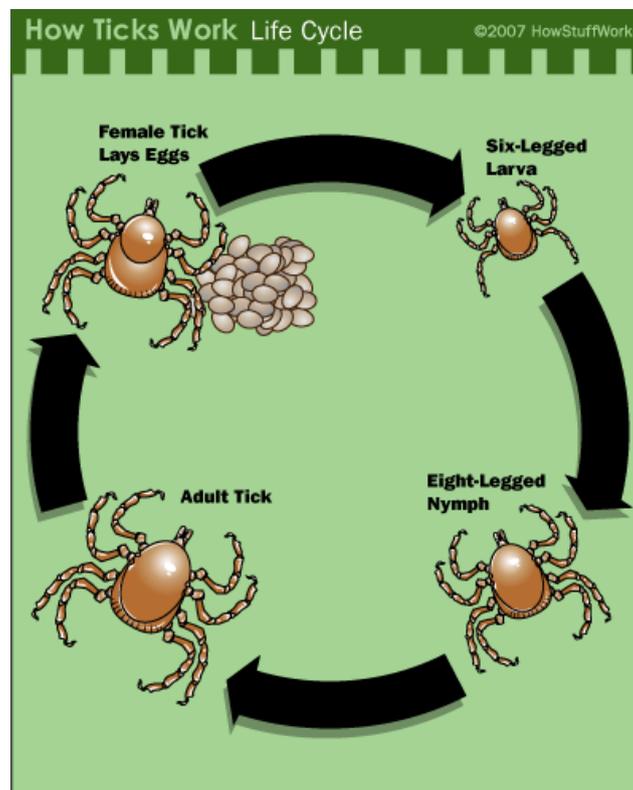
After mating, our males usually die. Females die after laying their eggs (thousands of them!).



<http://chipolos.fr/images/tiques4.jpg>

We undergo four stages of development:

The egg, the larva, the nymph and the adult.



<http://static.ddmcdn.com/gif/tick-10.gif>

In most cases, we find a new host at each stage :

When we come out of the egg as larvae, we settle on a first host. After feeding, we drop to the ground. We then molt and transform into nymph before finding a new host for our next meal. We then drop again to the ground develop into an adult. Once adult, we look for a third host for our last meal.



The search for a host takes place on grass blades, leaves etc. or on the ground.



When feeding, we fill with blood and our body gets considerably bigger (scientists weighed one of my friends after 4 days of meal: she weighed 624 times more than before!)

During our meals, we can transmit numerous pathogenic agents to our hosts (viruses, bacteria, protozoans, nematodes).

We are quite resistant to destruction and are capable of escaping the various methods of cleaning of our hosts (fawning, scratching, mud or dust baths, self-grooming). Monkeys social grooming is one of the most efficient way to get rid of us.

We however have predators (but apparently not enough ...):

- Some lizards ;
- Some insectivorous mammals (shrews, moles, squirrels etc.) ;
- Some birds :
  - the red billed oxpecker (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*) and the yellow billed oxpecker (*Buphagus africanus*) can daily eat up to 12.000 tick larvae or around a hundred females filled with blood (M.Stutterheim et al. 1998) ,
  - the cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) also called "tick bird",
  - chickens (in Kenya, vets relieved african cows and goats from their ticks by putting them in a small enclosure with chickens. One chicken can eat up to 200 ticks in three hours !) ;
  - guineafowls;

- some insects :
  - some beetles and some ants species;
  - many parasitoid wasps (humans would like to use them to control tick populations but they can't breed them massively yet);
- some spiders ;
- some acaridae ;
- some amphibians.

### We transmit numerous diseases to humans as animal such as:

- **Lyme disease** (unfortunately, we have infested some of the humans at Mikembo...): it develops over many years or decades and goes through three stages. During the first stage, the common symptoms are fever, headache, fatigue, depression, and sometimes swollen glands and a characteristic rash (erythema migrans). Left untreated, this disease can directly or indirectly affect most human organs and lead to acute or chronic problems with joints, muscles and bones, heart, nervous system and can finally lead to physical and mental handicap. Because of its symptoms, this disease is often mistaken for a resistant malaria!
- **African pork plague** (in the tropics),
- **rickettsiosis** (including typhus),
- **Q fever**,
- **many viral diseases**,

Our bites can sometimes cause hives or allergic shocks...

The best way to prevent from getting sick is to avoid getting bitten. Wear clothes that cover your skin, wear long socks over your pants and use repellents. Carefully inspect your body after walks in the bush.

If you find a tick on your body, take it out as quickly as possible. Be careful not to squeeze its abdomen: this makes it regurgitate its saliva which might contaminate you... It is also advised not to apply any product (ether, alcohol, oil...) as it would feel attacked and might regurgitate... Also be careful not to break its rostrum (mouthpart that is embedded in the skin) because if it stays in your skin you could get an inflammation...

### The tick in the literacy:

In *Perfume, The story of a murderer*, Patrick Süskind compares Jean-Baptiste Grenouille to a tick. Like a tick, he can be patient forever, waiting for the perfect time to free himself and accomplish the mission of his life.

### The modern world « tick »:

Some jokes (with the most honorable intentions, of course!)

