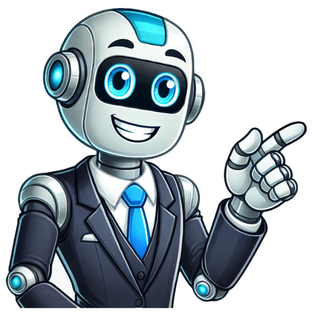
I'm not a robot



If you, family members, or pets have itchy bites lasting several days but don't remember seeing an insect, they could be chigger bites. Chiggers are immature mites that can lurk in your backyard in tall grass, weed patches, and damp spots underneath trees. They are also found in areas with brush or thicket combined with moisture, like along stream banks. A common misconception is that chiggers burrow under the skin, but the itchy red spots are actually an allergic reaction to the saliva of the tiny pests. Here's how to get rid of chiggers from your body, control them on your property, and prevent bites from occurring. Chiggers, also known as red bugs, harvest lice, or harvest mites, are the larvae of certain mites of the Trombiculidae family. Like spiders and ticks, chiggers are arachnidsbut extremely small ones. Adults get to about 1/60 inch in size. The red-colored larvae of chiggers are so smallonly 1/120 to 1/150 of an inchthat you can barely see them. There are dozens of genera within their family, and hundreds of species, but the chiggers in your landscape are limited to those species native to your region. They live all over the world but are most problematic in the American South, Southeast, and Midwest.In North America, most chiggers are from the Trombicula genus, especially the T. alfreddugesi species. The species native to North America generally do not spread diseases. Chiggers are most active in the late spring to early fall but can be found all year in warmer areas since their activity mostly depends on the temperature. Chiggers are most active when the ground temperature is between 77 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit. You can not spot chiggers with the naked eye (you will need a microscope to see the pests), but you can see their bites. They appear as clusters of dark-red, raised bumps. Chiggers tend to bite in spots where your skin and clothes rub together, such as waistbands and the elastic tops of socks, or where the skin folds, like behind the knees, in the groin area, and around the waist. So if your bites are in these spots, they could very likely be from chiggers. Note: Chiggers do not burrow into skin, despite popular belief, they just bite and latch onto the skin, causing a reaction with their saliva. If you've been outside and think you've been exposed to chiggers, shower immediately with soap when you get back indoors. They can live on human skin for up to four days but don't attach right away. However, they do not usually last longer than one to two days since their bite causes people to scratch and rub them off their skin. Here is how to handle them on your clothing: Remove your chigger-infested clothing and immediately put it in a washing machine. Wash them on a cycle using hot water and detergent. Use a hot drying cycle once the wash is finished. You can control chiggers by making your yard less attractive for themchiggers like moist areas with dense vegetation. Prune your trees and shrubs to let in more sunlight and decrease humidity. Regularly mow your lawn closely around trees, shrubs, and edges between garden beds and woody or naturalized areas. Remove piles of debris and brush to discourage rodents and small mammals from settling in your yard, as they are the primary hosts for chiggers. Controlling chiggers does not mean that everything has to be manicured. You can still have your pollinator gardens, meadow-style beds, and other naturalized landscapes so long as you take appropriate protective measures. If you are a gardener who can not avoid brushing against vegetation, wear protective clothing when working in tall grass, overgrown areas, and brush. Wear long sleeves and pants, tuck your pants into your socks, wear work boots, and tuck your sleeves into gardening gloves. Also, treat your clothing with insect repellents containing DEET. You can also try DEET-free alternatives, but check the label to see if the product effectively repels chiggers. Protect yourself from chiggers with pants and boots.Credit: Getty Images / RCKeller Unless you have a place in your yard infested with chiggers for consecutive years, spraying insecticides is not usually a good solution. Broad-spectrum insecticides also kill beneficial insects and should only be the last resort. Spray products containing bifenthrin, carbaryl, cyhalothrin, or permethrin for a one-time application in late April through mid-June when the chiggers hatch. Like with all chemicals, read the label carefully. Spraying the entire lawn is not effective, instead focus on areas that chiggers, like unkempt areas, low-growing vegetation, and tall grass. You can significantly reduce chigger populations with a few simple measures: Trim things down: Eliminate brush and long grass to foster sun exposure. Good sun exposure to all areas of your landscape will dramatically reduce the number of chiggers.Remove debris: Dispose of loose branches and leaves on your property to keep chiggers at bay (they love to settle in shady and moist places) and keep them from making a home in your yard.Control host pests: Remove debris from your property to keep small animals (the primary host for chiggers) from settling in your yard. Also, relocate or get rid of any other spots where they might nest as well as food and water sources like trash cans and bird baths.Use DEET spray: Spray your clothing with an insect repellent containing DEET before you hit the garden. Focus on spraying exposed skin and the openings of your clothing.Wear protective clothing outside: Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, and tuck the ends of your shirt and pants into your socks and gloves to seal off your skin as much as possible. Chigger bite.Credit: John Brandauer / Flickr / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0FAQOrganic pesticides like diatomaceous earth can kill chiggers instantly outside, while hot water (in the shower and in the washing machine) will kill chiggers instantly on your body and clothing.Chiggers can not live without a host, so they can not live in your bed on their own. However, they could end up in your bed if they are on your clothing or skin when you get into bed and attach to you but otherwise wont survive more than a day or two on their own. Chigger bite remediesMedical treatmentsSeeking medical helpSymptomsSummaryAfter removing chiggers from the skin, you may be able to relieve your symptoms by bathing and applying topical products, such as calamine lotion or colloidal oatmeal. Some medications may also help.Chiggers are parasites that bite your skin in clusters, often for hours or days if you do not wash them off your skin. Theyre prevalent in the southeastern United States. Its hard to spot chiggers because they are microscopic, and you may never see them on your skin. The first sign you have chigger bites could be the physical evidence of their bites, and symptoms appear a day or so after they bite you. There are many ways to treat these bites at home to soothe symptoms and prevent infection. In general, chigger bites are more uncomfortable than harmful to your health.There are many ways to treat chigger bites at home. You want to focus on getting the chiggers off your skin, soothing the skin from itching and pain, and avoiding infection. Always follow the directions of products you use to treat chigger bites.There is no need to suffocate the chiggers with products like nail polish or petroleum jelly, as you might with fleas.Bathing or showering with hot water following exposure to chiggers may help remove any remaining bugs from your skin and soothe it. Make sure to apply soap during your bath or shower, and use a washcloth for friction against the skin to ensure they come off.Its likely that chiggers no longer remain on your skin if the area itches. If the chigger bites itch, taking a cool shower or bath may soothe your symptoms.It may be helpful when treating chigger bites, particularly with bath products or moisturizers after bathing or showering. You may find products containing colloidal oatmeal at your local pharmacy or grocery store. Follow the directions of the product packaging.Calamine lotion is an over-the-counter product that can soothe your skin by relieving itching. It can also dry out bug bites that start to secrete ooze. You can apply it a few times a day.There are several over-the-counter medications you can use to treat chigger bites:Oral antihistamines reduce itching and inflammation. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) is one type of oral antihistamine.Oral medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can relieve pain and discomfort. Ibuprofen can also reduce inflammation.Topical creams containing ingredients that reduce itching, inflammation, and irritation can also be effective. Look for products that include camphor, menthol, or pramoxine. Hydrocortisone is a product that contains topical steroids that may relieve symptoms.Topical antiseptics clean the bite area and reduce the likelihood of infection.Essential oils are a complementary or alternative therapy and are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. You should use essential oils with caution. Some essential oils for bug bites that may soothe inflammation or itching include: tea treelavendercamphorrosemarybasilMake sure to dilute essential oils with a carrier oil or moisturizer before using them on your skin. Dont use them orally or put them near your eyes.Essential oils may also help ward off chigger bites. One study focused on a type of chigger native to Asia found that clove, tea tree, cassumunar ginger, and eucalyptus globulus repelled 100 percent of chiggers.Apply an ice pack or cold compress to chigger bites that itch. Use a towel or a light cloth between an ice pack and your skin to avoid very cold temperatures touching your skin directly.Keep your fingernails short so you dont open up the affected skin if you scratch it. Scratching chigger bites with sharp or long nails could lead to infections.You may need to deal with chigger bites with a stronger treatment. A doctor may prescribe: topical steroid ointment or cream if you have more severe symptomsantibiotic (if the bites become infected)There are several reasons you may want to call a doctor about chigger bites:Your bites become more irritated, ooze, or do not heal, which are signs of infection.You feel ill and have a fever, which could be a sign of an infection.You have a severe allergic reaction.Medical emergencyIf you have the following symptom of a severe allergic reaction to the chigger bites, called anaphylactic shock, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room:severe swellinghives or a rashfeverthroat swellingOptum Now is owned by RVO Health. By clicking on this link, we may receive a commission. Learn more.Chiggers often bite in areas where your skin folds, such as the backs of your knees or armpits, or near restrictive bands of clothing like around the holes of your underwear, the waist of your pants, or the elastic of your socks.Physical evidence of chigger bites include:reddish, raised pimples that appear in clumpsred dot at the center of the biteitchy skin near the bitespain near the bitesChigger bite symptoms can range in severity depending on your skins sensitivity to the bites and how long the parasites remained on your skin.There are several ways to soothe chigger bite symptoms at home. Make sure to remove the bugs from your skin before you start treating the irritation, itching, and swelling. You can try to soothe symptoms with over-the-counter medications, by bathing, and possibly even with essential oils. Call your doctor if symptoms linger or get worse.Healthline has strict sourcing guidelines and relies on peer-reviewed studies, academic research institutions, and medical journals and associations. We only use quality, credible sources to ensure content accuracy and integrity. You can learn more about how we ensure our content is accurate and current by reading our editorial policy.Chiggers, also known as red bugs, can bite humans, causing itchiness, inflammation, and skin discoloration. Symptoms typically resolve independently. Several treatments can help reduce irritation.Read on to learn about chiggers, what their bite looks like, and how to treat the bites.Chiggers are small mites from the Trombiculid family that inhabit woodland and grassy environments. When theyre in larval form, they can latch onto human skin and cause irritation through their bites. Despite what you may have heard, they do not actually burrow into the skin. As adults, chiggers are not parasitic. They are only a problem for humans when theyre still in larval form.Chigger larvae are very small, averaging between 1/120 and 1/150 inches in diameter, according to the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology (ACOD), which makes them hard to see.Theyre most likely to attack exposed skin folds of the body or areas covered with tight clothing that they can penetrate.These creatures feed on bits of skin, secreting a digestive enzyme, which causes intense itching and irritation. This condition is called trombiculiasis.Share on PinterestKambrose123 (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 ( ], via Wikimedia CommonsChiggers will usually attach to clothing and migrate their way to the skin. They often show up on the:lower legsanklesbehind the kneesarmpitswaistlinegroinBites from chigger mites can cause:irritation and itchinessskin discolorationclusters of small spot-like bumpsYou will not feel it when a chigger latches on, and you probably will not feel anything when it bites. However, most people report symptoms within hours of the bite.The most problematic symptom of chigger bites is the intense itching and formation of bumps that may look like welts, blisters, pimples, or hives. Chigger bites are most common in places where clothing fits tightly. Most chigger bites occur around the ankles, waist, armpits, crotch, or behind the knees.Disease transmission via chigger bites is an understudied area. However, chigger bites can transmit scrub typhus in rare cases. Scrub typhus can result in multiple organ failure and can be potentially fatal without treatment.The transmission of other diseases is possible, but evidence in this area is lacking.Chigger bites are largely seasonal in the Northern Hemisphere. The larval mites mature between June and September, making trombiculiasis most common in the summer and fall. In more tropical regions around the world, chigger mites feed year-round.Common areas where you may be subject to chigger bites include overgrown grassy areas, forests, or moist ground near bodies of water.Chigger bites can be distinguished from other common arthropod bites in certain ways.Bed bug bites tend to occur in a clustered or zigzag formation in raised red bumps, while chigger bites are more grouped around areas where tight clothing meets the skin and may show up as either flat or raised.Flea bites and chigger bites occur in similar patterns and may resemble each other. The main difference is that chigger bites tend to be hard and scabby in the center.Mosquito bites tend to be larger bumps that show up individually rather than in clusters.The following remedies may help reduce inflammation and itching.In more complicated situations, a professional may prescribe:corticosteroid injections if severe inflammation develops, though this is raredoxycycline if the bites have led to scrub typhusIt can take up to 2 weeks for chigger bites to heal.If you suspect you have chigger bites, immediately wash your skin with soap and water and clean any clothes you wear. This will get rid of any remaining chiggers on your body.In the meantime, try to avoid scratching the area, as further breaks to the skin barrier can increase the risk of further infection. Apply an antiseptic to any welts.Chiggers are often too small to be visible in grassland or woodland environments. As a result, preventive measures are typically general ones.Spring, summer, and fall are prime times for chigger bites. When youre in wooded areas that may be chigger-infested, try not to brush up against vegetation. When hiking, walk in the center of the trails rather than along the sides.Chiggers live in tall weeds and grass, berry patches, and wooded areas. They may be in your backyard, by the lake, and clustered along your favorite hiking trail. They are most active in spring, summer, and fall afternoons when temperatures are warm.Wear long sleeves and long pants that can be tucked into your socks or shoes. Use insect or tick repellent, especially around the tops of your shoes, shirt neck, cuffs, and waistband. Shower as soon as you go indoors. Wash your clothes in hot water.Its important to see a doctor if your chigger bites do not subside in 2 weeks, if inflammation increases, or if you experience any symptoms of scrub typhus, such as:dark scab-like region at the site of the bitefeverchillsheadachebody aches and muscle painmental confusionenlarged lymph nodesrashChigger bites can cause itchy, inflamed bumps on the skin. These larval mites are common in grassy and woodland environments and are often too small for you to notice them. Symptoms of chigger bites typically resolve independently. Antihistamines, cold compresses, and anti-itch lotions can help manage symptoms.If your symptoms do not resolve within 2 weeks, its recommended that you schedule an appointment with a healthcare professional.Healthline has strict sourcing guidelines and relies on peer-reviewed studies, academic research institutions, and medical journals and associations. We only use quality, credible sources to ensure content accuracy and integrity. You can learn more about how we ensure our content is accurate and current by reading our editorial policy.Small raised bumps on your skin may have multiple causes. Two common culprits include bed bugs and chiggers. Both are parasites living off the blood of people or animals.Bedbug and chigger bites may look similar, but bed bugs and chiggers live in different environments. Bedbug and chigger bites can be uncomfortable and irritating but not a risk to your overall health.Bed bugs live near sleeping quarters. You may find evidence of bed bugs if you notice brown or red spots on your sheets. You may also smell something sweet and musty if bed bugs are nearby.Chiggers live in groups or clusters, and when they attach to your body, they may feed off of it for several hours or days if you do not wash yourself or scratch them off. You may feel them on your skin and never see them because of their microscopic size.Physical symptoms of bedbug bites may include:raised and inflamed bumpsitchy bumpsa cluster or a zigzag line of bitesBedbug bites most often occur on skin exposed during sleep and may look like bites from mosquitos or fleas. Visible bumps may develop within a few days or up to two weeks after a bite.You may also find that bedbug bites cause:difficulty sleepinganxiety or irritabilityskin irritationNot everyone will have the same symptoms from bedbug bites because some people may be more sensitive to these bugs and develop more severe symptoms.Physical symptoms of chigger bites may include:small pimples that are raised changes in the skin (like darker skin or redness around the bite)itchy skin that gets itchier over timeclusters of bites around areas of your body where you wear tight clothing, such as the elastic of underwear or around your sock lineYou may notice chigger bites change while healing. The center of the bite may appear to have a cap that oozes if scratched. Bug bites are not always visible right away. They may take some time to become evident.You may not know that youve been bitten by bed bugs unless you actually see evidence of them where youve slept.You likely will not feel a bite from bed bugs because they release a substance that numbs your skin and keeps any blood from running out of the bite area.After a few days, you may be able to see the small bumps on your skin.If you have chiggers on you for a short amount of time, the symptoms of a bite may be mild and last only a few days. You will likely feel them as they bite or hours later. Chiggers that stay on you for a longer length of time, such as while you sleep, may cause more severe symptoms and last longer. Symptoms may be more visible then.Both bedbug and chigger bites appear as raised and inflamed spots on your skin. In darker skin tones, inflammation may look like discolored skin or skin that is different than your natural tone.Bedbug bites appear most frequently near areas of exposed skin and may appear in lines or in random clusters. Chigger bites are grouped together in locations near tight-fitting clothing.Both bedbug and chigger bites will resolve on their own with time. If your skin is itchy or theres a risk of infection, treatment can help. It focuses on calming symptoms so you can be more comfortable.The first line of treatment for both bedbug and chigger bites is to avoid scratching them and leaving them alone as much as possible.Make sure to wash the affected area with warm, soapy water if you suspect chigger bites. This will make sure no chiggers remain on your skin.You can apply cool compresses to the bites with a washcloth or towel.There are many over-the-counter medication options to reduce bedbug and chigger bite symptoms.Topical creams, ointments, and lotions may soothe the itch caused by bed bugs and chiggers. These include those containing steroids, like hydrocortisone. An oral antihistamine may also help control itching or swelling.If the bite area becomes irritated, painful, or starts oozing pus, it may be infected. Treating an infection may require antibiotics, but only a healthcare professional can provide an accurate diagnosis and the right treatment.Optum Now is owned by RVO Health. By clicking on this link, we may receive a commission. Learn more.Consider medical attention if you:have symptoms that get worse over time or do not heal after a few weeksdevelop other symptoms like fever, body aches, or chillsnotice signs of an infection, like pus, pain, or bloodhave difficulty breathing or swollen areas of your body, especially of your throat (this may be a sign of an allergic reaction)The best way to prevent bedbug and chigger bites is to avoid the bugs.Bedbug removal requires fumigation. If you have bed bugs in your home, call a professional. Bed bugs can live for several months between feedings.Keep spaces where bed bugs may live clean. Cleaning regularly will help you spot signs of bed bugs. For example, your mattress and closet.If you are traveling and worried about bed bugs, consider sleeping in clothing that covers most of your skin. You can also use an insect repellant.Limit your exposure to chiggers by avoiding contact with grasses and weeds. Do not sit directly on lawns, and make sure to keep your landscaping maintained. Overgrown yards can contribute to more chiggers.When youre outside, wear bug spray and dress in clothing that covers most of your body. This may include tucking your pants into your socks or wearing gloves tucked into long-sleeved shirts.Both bed bugs and chiggers are tiny parasites that can cause uncomfortable pimple-like bumps on your skin. These bites may cause a few days of irritation, but they are generally not harmful in the long term. Its difficult to differentiate bedbug from chigger bites.To reduce the chances of infection, avoid scratching the bites, and use home remedies and over-the-counter medications to soothe symptoms. If you, family members, or pets have itchy bites lasting several days but don't remember seeing an insect, they could be chigger bites. Chiggers are immature mites that can lurk in your backyard in tall grass, weed patches, and damp spots underneath trees. 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Protect yourself from chiggers with pants and boots.Credit: Getty Images / RCKeller Unless you have a place in your yard infested with chiggers for consecutive years, spraying insecticides is not usually a good solution. Broad-spectrum insecticides also kill beneficial insects and should only be the last resort. Spray products containing bifenthrin, carbaryl, cyhalothrin, or permethrin for a one-time application in late April through mid-June when the chiggers hatch. Like with all chemicals, read the label carefully. Spraying the entire lawn is not effective, instead focus on areas that chiggers, like unkempt areas, low-growing vegetation, and tall grass. You can significantly reduce chigger populations with a few simple measures: Trim things down: Eliminate brush and long grass to foster sun exposure. Good sun exposure to all areas of your landscape will dramatically reduce the number of chiggers.Remove debris: Dispose of loose branches and leaves on your property to keep chiggers at bay (they love to settle in shady and moist places) and keep them from making a home in your yard.Control host pests: Remove debris from your property to keep small animals (the primary host for chiggers) from settling in your yard. Also, relocate or get rid of any other spots where they might nest as well as food and water sources like trash cans and bird baths.Use DEET spray: Spray your clothing with an insect repellent containing DEET before you hit the garden. Focus on spraying exposed skin and the openings of your clothing.Wear protective clothing outside: Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, and tuck the ends of your shirt and pants into your socks and gloves to seal off your skin as much as possible. Chigger bite.Credit: John Brandauer / Flickr / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0FAQOrganic pesticides like diatomaceous earth can kill chiggers instantly outside, while hot water (in the shower and in the washing machine) will kill chiggers instantly on your body and clothing.Chiggers can not live without a host, so they can not live in your bed on their own. However, they could end up in your bed if they are on your clothing or skin when you get into bed and attach to you but otherwise wont survive more than a day or two on their own. Treatment for chiggers includes home remedies to combat itching as well as over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Chiggers are juvenile forms of a mite from the family Trombiculidae. Chiggers are only barely visible to the naked eye. Juvenile forms are red in color and have 6 legs. Chiggers live in all parts of the world. They are most commonly found in forests, grassy fields, parks, gardens, and in moist areas around lakes or

~:text=They'll%20attach%20to%20the,if%20they're%20not%20removed. Chigger Bites. Cleveland Clinic. Accessed June 11, 2024. target="_blank"> Stoppler MC, MD. How to Treat Chigger Bites. E Medicine Health. Accessed June 11, 2024. Chigger Bites. Cleveland Clinic. Accessed June 11, 2024. target="_blank"> Tarantino C, MPH. Chigger Bites What Are They, Appearance, and More. Osmosis from Elsevier. Accessed June 11, 2024. ~:text=The%20bites%20appear%20as%20small,mite%20will%20bite%20only%20once. If you, family members, or pets have itchy bites lasting several days but don't remember seeing an insect, they could be chigger bites. Chiggers are immature mites that can lurk in your backyard in tall grass, weed patches, and damp spots underneath trees. They are also found in areas with brush or thicket combined with moisture, like along stream banks. A common misconception is that chiggers burrow under the skin, but the itchy red spots are actually an allergic reaction to the saliva of the tiny pests. Here's how to get rid of chiggers from your body, control them on your property, and prevent bites from occurring. Chiggers, also known as red bugs, harvest lice, or harvest mites, are the larvae of certain mites of the Trombiculidae family. Like spiders and ticks, chiggers are arachnidsbut extremely small ones. Adults get to about 1/60 inch in size. The red-colored larvae of chiggers are so smallonly 1/120 to 1/150 of an inchthat you can barely see them. There are dozens of genera within their family, and hundreds of species, but the chiggers in your landscape are limited to those species native to your region. They live all over the world but are most problematic in the American South, Southeast, and Midwest.In North America, most chiggers are from the Trombicula genus, especially the T. alfreddugesi species. The species native to North America generally do not spread diseases. Chiggers are most active in the late spring to early fall but can be found all year in warmer areas since their activity mostly depends on the temperature. Chiggers are most active when the ground temperature is between 77 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit. You can not spot chiggers with the naked eye (you will need a microscope to see the pests), but you can see their bites. They appear as clusters of dark-red, raised bumps. Chiggers tend to bite in spots where your skin and clothes rub together, such as waistbands and the elastic tops of socks, or where the skin folds, like behind the knees, in the groin area, and around the waist. So if your bites are in these spots, they could very likely be from chiggers. Note: Chiggers do not burrow into skin, despite popular belief, they just bite and latch onto the skin, causing a reaction with their saliva. If you've been outside and think you've been exposed to chiggers, shower immediately with soap when you get back indoors. They can live on human skin for up to four days but don't attach right away. However, they do not usually last longer than one to two days since their bite causes people to scratch and rub them off their skin. Here is how to handle them on your clothing: Remove your chigger-infested clothing and immediately put it in a washing machine. Wash them on a cycle using hot water and detergent. Use a hot drying cycle once the wash is finished. You can control chiggers by making your yard less attractive for themchiggers like moist areas with dense vegetation. Prune your trees and shrubs to let in more sunlight and decrease humidity. Regularly mow your lawn closely around trees, shrubs, and edges between garden beds and woody or naturalized areas. Remove piles of debris and brush to discourage rodents and small mammals from settling in your yard, as they are the primary hosts for chiggers. Controlling chiggers does not mean that everything has to be manicured. You can still have your pollinator gardens, meadow-style beds, and other naturalized landscapes so long as you take appropriate protective measures. If you are a gardener who can not avoid brushing against vegetation, wear protective clothing when working in tall grass, overgrown areas, and brush. Wear long sleeves and pants, tuck your pants into your socks, wear work boots, and tuck your sleeves into gardening gloves. Also, treat your clothing with insect repellents containing DEET. You can also try DEET-free alternatives, but check the label to see if the product effectively repels chiggers. Protect yourself from chiggers with pants and boots.Credit: Getty Images / RCKeller Unless you have a place in your yard infested with chiggers for consecutive years, spraying insecticides is not usually a good solution. Broad-spectrum insecticides also kill beneficial insects and should only be the last resort. Spray products containing bifenthrin, carbaryl, cyhalothrin, or permethrin for a one-time application in late April through mid-June when the chiggers hatch. Like with all chemicals, read the label carefully. Spraying the entire lawn is not effective, instead focus on areas that chiggers, like unkempt areas, low-growing vegetation, and tall grass. You can significantly reduce chigger populations with a few simple measures: Trim things down: Eliminate brush and long grass to foster sun exposure. Good sun exposure to all areas of your landscape will dramatically reduce the number of chiggers.Remove debris: Dispose of loose branches and leaves on your property to keep chiggers at bay (they love to settle in shady and moist places) and keep them from making a home in your yard.Control host pests: Remove debris from your property to keep small animals (the primary host for chiggers) from settling in your yard. Also, relocate or get rid of any other spots where they might nest as well as food and water sources like trash cans and bird baths.Use DEET spray: Spray your clothing with an insect repellent containing DEET before you hit the garden. Focus on spraying exposed skin and the openings of your clothing.Wear protective clothing outside: Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, and tuck the ends of your shirt and pants into your socks and gloves to seal off your skin as much as possible. Chigger bite.Credit: John Brandauer / Flickr / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0FAQOrganic pesticides like diatomaceous earth can kill chiggers instantly outside, while hot water (in the shower and in the washing machine) will kill chiggers instantly on your body and clothing.Chiggers can not live without a host, so they can not live in your bed on their own. However, they could end up in your bed if they are on your clothing or skin when you get into bed and attach to you but otherwise wont survive more than a day or two on their own. Chiggers (trombiculidae) are a species of mite, and are a close relative to spiders and ticks. Chiggers are microscopic and are almost invisible to the naked eye. Once chiggers hatch from eggs (larva), the mites feed on the skin tissue of a host (human or animal) before falling off and turning into an adult mite. Found around the world, chiggers live outdoors on plants in wooded or grassy areas, typically around water. They are most active during the summer months when temperatures are hot.What are chigger bites?Chigger larva will attach to your clothing and move to your skin to feed. The chigger larva will release a liquid chemical into your skin to kill skin cells (digestive enzyme). The dead skin cells form a tiny straw (stylostome) for the chigger to drink your skin tissue. The chiggers chemical causes itching that is very intense for the first 24-48 hours before slowly going away over the next two weeks. Chiggers will fall off of your skin if you begin to scratch.Who do chigger bites affect?Chigger bites can affect anyone who might pick chiggers up on their clothing outdoors in grassy, wet or wooded areas.Where do chiggers bite?Chiggers live in grass or wooded areas and attach to your clothing. Their favorite sites to feed are areas where your skin and clothing have close contact, especially at waistbands, bra lines and sock lines, or where your skin folds. Common areas where chiggers bite include:Ankles.Lower legs.Behind your knees.Waist.Groin.How common are chigger bites?Chigger bites are very common in the summer months when temperatures are warm to hot. Many people dont report chigger bites, so the actual number of cases is unknown.How do chigger bites affect my body?You probably won't notice chigger bites right away. It could take up to three hours after the mite makes contact with your skin before you experience any symptoms. Chigger bites cause itching near the bite zone. Chiggers (also called harvest mites or red bugs) are tiny red, biting mites. Their bites aren't painful, but do cause intense itching. Chiggers are members of the arachnid family (the same family that includes spiders and ticks). They are smaller than a period at the end of a sentence. Most can only be seen with a magnifying glass. Chiggers are found all over the outdoors, including in grassy fields, along lakes and streams, and in forests. It's the baby chiggers that bite people and animals. How Do Chigger Bites Happen? After hatching, baby chiggers wait on plants for people or animals to pass by. When they do, the chigger attaches to them using tiny claws. Once attached, it pierces their skin and injects its saliva (spit). The spit contains digestive juices that dissolve skin cells. The chigger then eats the dissolved cells, which provide the protein it needs to grow into an adult. After a couple of days the chigger falls off, leaving a red bump on the skin. What Are the Signs of Chigger Bites? Chigger bites are itchy red bumps that can look like pimples, blisters, or small hives. They are usually found around the waist, ankles, or in warm skin folds. They get bigger and itchier over several days, and often appear in groups. Chigger bites start to itch within hours of the chigger attaching to the skin. The itch stops after a few days, and the red bumps heal over 12 weeks. If chigger bites happen on the penis, they can cause swelling, itching, and painful peeing. This is known as "summer penile syndrome." How Are Chigger Bites Diagnosed? Doctors can diagnose chigger bites by looking at them and asking about a person's recent outdoor activities. How Are Chigger Bites Treated? Unlike mosquitoes and ticks, chiggers don't carry disease. So they are not harmful, only annoying. You can usually treat chigger bites at home: Scrub chigger bites well with soap and water to help remove any chiggers that are still attached to the skin. Holding a cool washcloth over the bites can be soothing. Calamine lotion or anti-itch creams can help with the itching. Antihistamines (allergy medicine) taken by mouth can sometimes help with itching, especially if your child has trouble sleeping at night. Discourage kids from scratching at the bites because this can lead to: impetigo, a bacterial infection of the skin, with pus and crusts around the bites a larger area of increasing redness, swelling, pain, and warmth, called cellulitis Keeping fingernails short can help prevent skin damage from scratching. Antibiotics may be needed if a skin infection does happen. When Should I Call the Doctor? Call your doctor's office if: Over-the-counter creams or lotions don't help the itching. A bite looks infected (watch for warmth, redness, swelling, tenderness, or pus). Your child has symptoms of "summer penile syndrome." Can Chigger Bites Be Prevented? To help prevent chigger bites when enjoying the great outdoors: Apply an insect repellent with 10%30% DEET. Clothes also can be treated with a specific insecticide (like permethrin) to help prevent bites. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into shoes, especially during hiking. This also can help protect kids from other biting critters like ticks and mosquitoes. Wash kids' skin with soap and water when they come back inside. Wash all clothes in hot water and tumble dry on high heat before they're worn again. Chigger bites aren't contagious, so kids can't catch them from someone or give them to somebody else. They can still play sports and do all normal activities unless the itching makes them too uncomfortable. If you, family members, or pets have itchy bites lasting several days but don't remember seeing an insect, they could be chigger bites. Chiggers are immature mites that can lurk in your backyard in tall grass,

rivers. Symptoms of chigger bites include intense itching and flat or raised red bumps on the skin. They sometimes have the appearance of a blister. Treatment for chiggers includes home remedies to combat itching as well as over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Chigger bites can be prevented by using insect repellants, washing clothing is worn outside in hot water and avoiding areas favorable for chiggers, such as low-lying vegetation near a humid source. Chiggers most commonly bite in areas of thinned skin such as wrinkles and folds.When the chigger bites, it inserts its feeding structures and mouthparts into the skin.The chigger mite is about 1/150th of an inch in length, meaning it is only barely visible to the naked eye. The juvenile forms, which bite humans, have six legs, while the adult forms have eight legs. Chigger mites are red in color, and the juvenile (biting) forms require a relatively humid environment, so they are most commonly located in vegetation that is near ground level. When human skin or clothing comes in contact with low-lying vegetation that hosts chiggers, the mites can infest the human and migrate on human skin in search of a feeding area.Chiggers most commonly bite in areas of thinned skin such as wrinkles and folds. Therefore, chigger bites are commonly observed in the crotch and groin areas, in the armpits, and in the folds behind the knees. The ankles are also a common site for chigger bites. Other areas that are commonly bitten by chiggers are areas where the compression of clothing (such as belts) presents barriers to their migration.A popular myth about chiggers is that they burrow into the skin and remain there, but this is incorrect. When the chigger bites, it inserts its feeding structures and mouthparts into the skin. They inject enzymes into the host skin that destroy the host tissue. The area then hardens, and a feeding tube, called a cyclostome, develops at the bite area. Chiggers can feed on the skin for a few days through this structure if they are not disturbed. Itching from chigger bites is most intense 1 to 2 days following the bite. Symptoms begin after the chigger has started to inject enzymes into the host skin. The actual bite itself is not noticeable. Symptoms of chigger bites include: Itching, that can be quite intense A raised or flat red bump on the skin A skin bump resembling a blister or a pimple Itching is the main symptom, and itching usually is most intense 1-2 days after the initial bite. The itching can last for several days, and it can take up to 2 weeks for the areas to return to normal appearance. Any condition characterized by intense itching can lead to scratching. In turn, scratching can lead to disruption of the skin, with the potential for secondary bacterial infections of the skin. Chigger bites can typically be managed at home without the need for medical care.However, medical care should be sought if a person has been bitten by a chigger and develops signs of a secondary bacterial infection of the skin (spreading areas of redness, warmth, pus, and increasing tenderness or pain). Chigger bites are typically identified based upon their location on the skin and a history of being outdoors or in contact with vegetation as well as the characteristic itching.Diagnostic tests are typically not required. Treatment of chigger bites is directed toward relief of the associated itching; this will reduce the chance of secondary bacterial infections due to scratching which can break down the skin barrier to infection.Both calamine lotion and corticosteroid creams may be useful in reducing the itching of chigger bites.Oral antihistamine medications, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) can also be useful.In many cases, no treatment is needed. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications can be used if necessary for control of symptoms of chigger bites. There have been many home remedies reported to treat chigger bites, but many of these are based upon the incorrect belief that the chiggers burrow into and reside in the skin. Home remedies designed to get rid of chiggers, such asbleach,nail polish,turpentine, oralcohol applied to the bites in an attempt to "suffocate" the chiggers are not effective since the mites do not actually reside within the skin.The only effective treatments are anti-itch creams and medications (see below). Home remedies to relieve itchings, such ascool showers orbaths,colloidal oatmeal baths, orcool compresses may bring some relief. People can take steps to prevent being bitten by chiggers using the following methods:Wash the skin with soap and water after outdoor activity.Wash clothing that has been worn outdoors with hot water.Avoid vegetation that is low to the ground when outdoor temperatures are favorable to chiggers. (Chiggers do not bite at colder temperatures [below 60 F or 15.5 C] and are not found in areas hotter than 99 F or 37.2 C.)Use insect repellents, such as DEET (carefully follow instructions on any insect repellent as some applied inappropriately may cause problems, especially in children).Wear long pants and long sleeves during outdoor activity along with high shoes or boots. Pant legs should be tucked into boots if possible. Chigger bites resolve on their own without any long-term complications. However, scratching of affected areas can result in skin wounds that can become infected by bacteria.Travelers to areas in Asia should be made aware that endemic scrub typhus from chigger bites needs to be treated quickly with appropriate antibiotics as untreated infections can lead to poor outlooks (encephalitis, pneumonitis, and death). Medically reviewed by Avrom Simon, MD; Board Certified Preventative Medicine with Subspecialty in Occupational Medicine REFERENCES:Cennimo, David J. "Scrub Typhus." Updated Jul 22, 2013< Missouri Department of Conservation. "Chiggers."< Chiggers are bugs so small that you need a magnifying glass to spot them. Scientists call these creatures "trombiculid mites" because they're from a family of mites called Neotrombicula autumnalis. But they have a bunch of nicknames. In North America, they're usually called chiggers. In Britain, they're known as harvest mites. They can also be called berry bugs, bush-mites, red bugs, or scrub-itch mites. Chiggers are so small that you probably won't see them. Although you'll see (and feel) their itchy bites, they usually don't cause serious harm. (Photo Credit: WebMD Illustration: Dreamstime, Wikimedia Commons). Chiggers actually aren't insects. They're "arachnids," in the same family as spiders and ticks. And while chiggers aren't a huge threat to your health, their bites can leave you with a strong urge to scratch.Adult chiggers don't bite. It's the babies, called larvae, that you have to watch out for.What do chiggers look like?If you're a fan of things that creep and crawl, you may find chiggers to be really cool. If not, a close-up picture of a chigger may remind you of something out of a horror movie.Chiggers are no more than 0.3 millimeters long, but zoom in and you'll see that they're hairy and red. (And turn yellow once they're full.) Once chiggers become adults, they have eight legs, but the young ones that bite you only have six. And while chiggers do have mouth parts that can pierce your skin, these pinchers are short and not very strong. That's why chiggers bite soft parts of your skin that fold or wrinkle. Where do chiggers live?You can travel across the globe, but you can't escape these pests. Chiggers live in every country. Their favorite spots are moist, grassy areas like fields, forests, and even your lawn. You can also find them near lakes and streams.After they hatch from eggs, baby chiggers don't fly very far on their own. They tend to stay clumped together in large groups on leaves and grass, usually less than a foot off the ground, and attach to animals or people as they pass by.In the U.S., chigger bites are most common in the late spring, summer, and early fall. The bugs are active when the ground temperature is between 77 and 86 F, and they can't survive once it gets colder than 42 F.Once chiggers latch onto your pants or shirt, they crawl around until they find a patch of skin. After they make tiny holes in your skin, they inject saliva (spit) that turns some of your cells into mush. Why do they do it? To a chigger, those now-liquid cells are food. Once they're attached to your skin, a chigger may stay there for several days while they feast.Do chiggers burrow under your skin? You've probably heard this before, but it's just not true. Chiggers have weak mouth muscles. They can latch onto you but can't go deeper than that. This myth likely started because as a chigger bite gets red and bulges, it can start to surround the chigger itself.What do chigger bites look like?You may see a line of small red spots or what look like pimples raised red bumps or pustules (pus-filled bumps). Chigger bites can happen anywhere on your body, but they often show up in clusters around your waist or lower legs.The clearest sign you've been bitten by a chigger: the itching. A few hours after you've been bitten, you'll have an urge to scratch a lot. The itching usually lasts for several days and can sometimes keep you awake at night. Aside from tiny red bumps, your skin could also get blisters or a hive-like rash that may take a week or two to heal.If you get a chigger bite on your penis, you could get a condition known as "summer penile syndrome." It causes swelling, itching, and trouble peeing. This can last for a few days to a few weeks.Scratching a chigger bite could break your skin and lead to irritation or an infection.Chiggers in the U.S. don't spread disease, but they can in other parts of the world. A bacteria called Orientia tsutsugamushi can be spread from bites of infected chiggers and cause a disease called scrub typhus. It can be life-threatening if not treated with an antibiotic.Most cases of scrub typhus come from chiggers in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, China, Japan, India, and northern Australia. See a doctor if you've traveled in one of these areas and have any of these symptoms:Chigger bites with dark scabsSkin rashFeverChillsHeadacheMuscle painBody achesFeeling confusedSwollen lymph nodesIf you think you've been around chiggers, give yourself a full body check. You may be able to see tiny red dots, either moving very quickly or attached to your skin.Your first step: Take a bath or shower and scrub your skin with soap and water. This washes off any chiggers that are still on you.Using hot water, wash your clothes and any blankets or towels that touched the ground to kill any bugs that are still hanging on.Then treat your bites with an over-the-counter anti-itch cream or ointment, like menthol, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone. You can also get relief if you take antihistamine pills or use a cold compress.You don't need an anti-parasite drug to get rid of chiggers. Oral drugs like ivermectin are prescribed to treat a different kind of mite, called scabies. Another myth is that you can kill chiggers by smearing nail polish or petroleum jelly on your skin. This doesn't work either.Chigger bites usually get better on their own. But if yours still bother you after a few days, see your doctor. In rare cases, you may need steroid shots to calm itching and swelling. Your doctor may also ask you to take antibiotics if your bites become infected.To help keep these pesky mites out of your yard, try to stay on top of mowing, weeding, and removing brush. In severe cases, some pest control treatments can help. Look for a lawn spray that contains one of these chemicals:BifenthrinCyfluthrinEsfenvaleratePermethrinTo apply, follow the steps on the label. Make sure to keep pets out of the area until it's fully dry. Many pest control products can be toxic to pets.Keep in mind that these treatments won't get rid of chiggers for good. They'll likely only clear your yard for a week or two.How to prevent bitesThe best way to avoid chigger bites? Try to avoid places where they thrive, such as grassy or wooded areas. (Especially in summer chiggers love hot, humid weather.) When you do spend time outdoors where chiggers may be, use an insect repellent that has DEET or wear clothing treated with an insecticide like permethrin. As you put on bug spray, pay close attention to areas where chiggers might travel from clothing to your skin, like the waist of your pants and the tops of your socks. Some studies show that natural sprays may help keep chiggers away. Try ones that have oils made from citronella, tea tree, jojoba, eucalyptus, geranium, or lemon grass.And of course, don't make yourself an easy target for a hungry chigger. Wear long sleeves and long pants, with your pant legs tucked into long socks. Once you come inside, take a shower to wash off any chiggers that may have hitched a ride.Chiggers on dogs and other petsChiggers can feed on your pets as well as you. You're most likely to see them on your dog or cat's head, belly, feet, or ears, because these areas have less fur. Even if you don't see the chiggers themselves, you could notice your pet scratching a lot. You could also spot redness, bumps that may be crusty, and bald patches.Call your veterinarian for advice on how to help your pet. If scratching has caused their skin to become infected, they may need an antibiotic or other medicine.Chiggers are mites that feed on your skin, found in areas with tall grass, dead leaves, or lots of brush. While their bite can cause redness, bumps, blisters, and severe itching, chiggers in the U.S. don't cause disease. If you've been exposed to chiggers, wash the area or take a shower as soon as you can. Over-the-counter anti-itch creams are usually enough to soothe your skin.If your skin gets worse, call your doctor. You may have an infection that needs to be treated.How long do chiggers stay on you?Chiggers can stay on your skin for a few days while they feed. Once they're full, they'll drop off. But you don't need to wait for that to happen. Scratching or washing the area is enough to bump a chigger off even sooner.Can chiggers live in your bed?Chiggers are found outside. They only come inside once they're attached to you. That's unlike bedbugs small, flat bugs that feed on your blood while you sleep. Once a chigger bites you, it can't bite you (or anyone else) again. Bedbugs, on the other hand, can live several months between feedings. What do chiggers look like on a human body?Remember, chiggers are so tiny that you probably won't see them. (But you'll feel itchy.) You can see an adult chigger, though. Not only are they bigger and bright red, but they have eight legs instead of six. The good news? Adult chiggers won't bite you.If youre a lover of the great outdoors, then you understand one nuisance all too well: There are a lot of insects to ward off. From mosquitoes to ticks, plenty of blood-sucking bugs are looking to get a taste of youand chiggers are just another pest waiting for their chance, especially in the midwest, south, and southeast parts of the U.S.Also known as berry bugs, red bugs, and harvest mites, chiggers are so small (think: 1/120-1/150 inch) that theyre hard to see with the naked eye. But if youve ever been bitten by one, you know the itch it leaves behind can be intense and incessant. So, whats the best way to deal with these parasites once spring hits? Here, we asked experts to break down what a chigger bite looks like, ways to treat and soothe the itch, and how to get rid of these berry bugs for good.What are chiggers, exactly?Chiggers are microscopic mites that are found in grassy areas, edges between lawns and forests, and on small mammals and birds, says Michael J. Raupp, Ph.D., professor of entomology at The University of Maryland and creator of Bug of the Week. They tend to prefer damp, shady habitats.Chiggers become most active during the late spring through early fall, and love to hitchhike onto your skin when you walk through an infested area. On humans, chiggers usually move up to places around socks, tops of your pants, around the stomach and belt line, and under the bra, Raupp says. Only the teeny-tiny, larval chiggers (a.k.a. babies!) bite humans. What do chigger bites look like?TimVickers / Wikimedia CommonsPhoto via Wikimedia CommonsChiggers do attach to and bite the skin, but contrary to popular belief, they dont burrow into your skin or suck blood. Most commonly, you can find chigger bites around the ankles, wrists, thighs, groin, and waist. While they can be extremely uncomfortable, rest assured that chiggers arent known to carry or transmit any diseases to humans.But the mechanism behind their bite is pretty crazy. Once the mite finds its host, the chigger secretes a digestive enzyme that breaks down your skin cells, causing the skin tissue to form a hardened, raised area that functions as a feeding tube. (This tube allows the mite to gain access to the digested skin cells.) After feeding for up to three days, the mite falls off. Cue the the relentless itching, which begins roughly three to six hours after the initial bite.Wilson44691/ Wikimedia CommonsPhoto via Wikimedia CommonsItching can last for up to two weeks, says Raupp. Its your reaction to the protein secreted into your skin, which your body breaks down over time. In addition to the itching, you can identify a chigger bite by the way it looks. On the skin, you might see either a flat, red patch or a raised, red bump, or sometimes even blisters or pustules, says Rajani Katta, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist who serves as voluntary clinical faculty of both the Baylor College of Medicine and the McGovern Medical School, University of Texas Houston.Whats the best way to treat a chigger bite?The good news is that these pesky bites will resolve on their own after several days. However, youll probably be dying for some relief. Here are a few different treatment options for itchy skin:Cortizone-10 Plus Ultra Moisturizing CreamOTC topical ointments: Apply soothing over-the-counter products like menthol or calamine to reduce itch, says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. You can also try an OTC hydrocortisone ointment to help reduce the redness and itching, says Dr. Katta. This can be used twice a day for up to two weeks to the area, although usually the symptoms will resolve before then.OTC oral meds: For some people, taking an antihistamine by mouth, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), can help with the itching, although it does cause drowsiness, says Dr. Katta.Cool compresses: This can also reduce inflammation and provide temporary relief from the itchiness, says Dr. Zeichner. Grab a frozen bag of peas if you have to. Its important to stop scratching at the skin, otherwise you may open yourself up to secondary infection.Prescription topicals: If it gets really bad, your dermatologist can give you a prescription for a cortisone cream stronger than what is available over the counter, says Dr. Zeichner. Skip these remedies: We dont recommend treatments such as rubbing alcohol, witch hazel, or apple cider vinegar, says Dr. Katta, as they can be irritating. Also, theres a common myth that applying nail polish to a chigger bite will work to suffocate the mites, but this doesnt hold up, as chiggers dont actually burrow into the skin, says Dr. Katta.How to prevent chigger bitesThe best way to treat a chigger bite? Avoid getting one in the first place with these tips: OFF! Deep Woods Insect RepellentApply insect repellant: Raupp suggests applying a DEET-based repellent on your boots and clothing if youre heading out to areas with thick greenery (avoid spraying directly onto your skin). If youre going to be out for a long amount of time, be sure to reapply your repellent ever two to three hours, Raupp says.Wear protective clothing: If you are going to be in grassy fields, make sure to wear long pants and sleeves, says Dr. Zeichner. Wearing permethrin-treated clothing, which also works effectively against ticks, can also be helpful.Hit the shower ASAP: Once you get back indoors, you should immediately take a hot shower and use soap to thoroughly wash your body to remove any remaining mites, says Dr. Zeichner. If you dont have access to a shower right way, use a towel to brush off your bodythis may help dislodge any that have camped out on your skin.Throw your clothes in the wash: Take off your clothing immediately after coming indoors. You should wash your clothing in hot, soapy water to kill any mites that may be living in the seams, says Dr. Zeichner. Hot is important here, as the mites can survive a wash in a cool cycle. How to get rid of chiggers in your yardIf you feel like there are tons of chiggers hanging out near your home, the best thing you can do is get rid of their habitat. Mow your lawn, trim your bushes, clear out tall weeds and grasses, and generally cut back any brush. It may seem simple, but this deprives the minuscule mites of the moisture and shade theyre drawn toand also keeps other animals they like to latch onto, like rodents, away from your lawn.Its important to do this landscaping each year as the weather starts to warm up, as adult chiggers will burrow into the soil during winter and lay eggs once spring hits, potentially infesting your yard all over again.Support from readers like you helps us do our best work. Go here to subscribe to Prevention and get 12 FREE gifts. And sign up for our FREE newsletter here for daily health, nutrition, and fitness advice.

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