

# How A Small Bug Can Kill You

*Recently, a 9-year-old Connecticut boy felt a strange sensation in his right ear, he told his doctor at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital.*

Three days earlier, he'd heard a buzzing noise in that ear. Still, the boy felt no real pain, and he could hear perfectly well, according to a case study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

When asked what he'd been doing, the boy said nothing more unusual than playing outdoors at school.

Dr. Erik Waldman, co-author of the report and chief of pediatric otolaryngology at the hospital, peered inside the boy's ear and saw something unexpected: A tick appeared to be implanted in the right tympanic membrane – the eardrum – where it was surrounded by inflamed tissue.

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## What you need to know about ticks



I know that no one wants to think about ticks because they're

creepy, gross-looking, and spread diseases. Well, that's exactly why you *should* start paying attention to them.

In the U.S., ticks are responsible for spreading potentially-life threatening infectious diseases, some of which can trigger not just chills, nausea, and a fever, but also neurological problems and even death. The most infamous of these infections is Lyme disease – according the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it's the most commonly reported vector-borne illness in the United States. (A "vector" is any living thing that can transfer diseases.) And while the rates have steadily increased since the 1990s, thousands of Lyme disease cases may go unreported.

So when it comes to ticks, ignorance is the opposite of bliss. Start reading up on what ticks look like, where they camp out, and what to do if one latches onto you. Developing an action plan now can potentially save you from a lot of suffering in the future.

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## Diseases caused by insects

Malaria, West Nile Virus, Lyme's disease, Murine typhus and even the plague are spread via insects and vermin such as mosquitoes, fleas, ticks, and rats.

Though these are lethal, the good thing is that most of them are fairly easy to avoid with good sanitation practices. Don't let water stand so that it can attract mosquitos, keep your living area clean so that it doesn't attract rats, and do what you can to prevent fleas and ticks.

[See the risks you're exposed to because of insects and how to avoid them<<](#)

## **This BUG Could Turn U.S. Into A Third World Country**

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