

## **Alpha-Gal Syndrome: When a Tick Bite Causes a Red Meat Allergy**

**AUDIO:** Faint music with no lyrics plays in the background, throughout the entire video.

**VISUALS:** A man, Rob, sits in his living room. View of a man's feet, walking at night.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I remember waking up in the middle of the night and feeling just really weird. Got up, felt lightheaded. Felt like I was going to fall over and then eventually, yeah, I was covered in hives.*

**TITLE TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Alpha-gal Syndrome. Subtitle: When a tick bite causes a red meat allergy. CDC logo below and centered.

**VISUALS:** Footage of an emergency room.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I went straight to the emergency room and they just said, looks like an allergic reaction of some sort, and prescribed me an EpiPen and sent me on my way.*

**VISUALS:** Rob appears again in his living room.

**NAME TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Rob – Georgia.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergy to products containing alpha-gal, such as red meat or dairy. Blue background animates to highlight the words over “serious, potentially life-threatening allergy.”

**VISUALS:** Rob appears again in his living room. The image shifts to a healthcare provider looking through forms. The image shifts to emergency room waiting area. The image shifts to Rob in his living room, and then Rob is pictured outside.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I was frustrated, I was scared. I didn't really understand what was going on, and there was nothing obvious that we could, you know, point to. They recommended seeing an allergist. Nothing came up. I felt like it was happening all the time. I got to the point where I would go to the emergency room but not check in. I would just let them know, “hey, I’m outside, just in case you see somebody fall over and pass out on that bench out there.” That went on for months.*

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** AGS is diagnosed through a detailed patient history, a physical exam, and a blood test. Blue background animates to highlight the words, “detailed patient history, a physical exam, and a blood test.”

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I eventually saw another allergist and she was like, “Well, there is this one thing that it could be, but you would’ve had to have been bit by a tick. And of course I was like, “alright, I get bit by ticks all the time.” I camp a lot. I go out in the woods all the time and I’m always pulling ticks off myself.*

**VISUALS:** Rob appears in his living room. Two photos of Rob camping in the woods with his family are shown.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** AGS is caused by the bite of a lone star tick and can take weeks to months to develop. Blue background animates to highlight the words, “bite of a lone star tick.”

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I had never heard of Alpha Gal syndrome before. It’s triggered by a lone star tick. They’re pretty easy to identify. They have like a lighter mark on their back.*

**VISUALS:** Rob appears in his living room. Image transitions to two photos of lone star ticks — one seen on a person’s fingernail, the other an even closer shot of a brown tick on a leaf, with a white spot on its back.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Most suspected cases of alpha-gal syndrome have been reported in the southern, midwestern, and mid-Atlantic United States (2017–2022). Blue background animates to highlight the words “southern, midwestern, and mid-Atlantic United States.”

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *It’s not like other common food allergies where you eat something and you have a reaction almost right away. The reaction is delayed from when you eat it, so that made it really hard to diagnose because I wasn’t associating my meal with the reaction.*

**VISUALS:** Rob speaking in his living room.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Allergic reactions appear 2–6 hours after consuming red meat, dairy products, or certain medications. Blue background animates to highlight the words, “appear 2–6 hours after consuming red meat or dairy products.”

**VISUALS:** Rob walks in his backyard and is seen grilling turkey dogs.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** AGS has no treatment, so avoiding products with alpha-gal is the best way to manage the disease. Blue background animates to highlight the words, “avoiding products with alpha-gal.”

**VISUALS:** Rob speaking in his living room.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *Turns out that to deal with it, the solution was that you essentially couldn’t eat meat. Specifically, I can’t eat red meat, I can’t eat pork, I can’t eat lamb. I can eat poultry, seafood, shellfish. I can’t eat regular hot dogs anymore, but I can enjoy a good turkey dog. At first, I did miss bacon, which is really delicious, but it’s just something I can’t eat anymore.*

**GRAPHIC APPEARS:** Icons show a cow with the word “beef,” a pig with the word “pork,” a lamb with the word “lamb,” a deer with the word “venison,” and a rabbit with the word “rabbit.” These are marked with an “X” symbol. Icons of a chicken with the word “chicken,” fish with the word “seafood,” and turkey with the word “turkey,” are marked with a checkmark.

**VISUALS:** Rob grills hot dogs. Rob appears back in his living room. Rob walks through the woods. Rob appears back in his living room.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *I never used to take precautions against tick bites. They weren’t really something that I ever gave a whole lot of thought to. We do still go camping in the same place but of course I take precautions now. I think it can certainly help.*

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Protect yourself from tick bites. Highlighted text below: Use an EPA-registered insect repellent.

**GRAPHIC:** Bug spray icon appears.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Protect yourself from tick bites. Highlighted text below: Wear clothes treated with 0.5% permethrin.

**GRAPHIC:** Spray bottle and long-sleeve shirt icons shown.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Protect yourself from tick bites. Highlighted text below: Stay away from tall grass.

**GRAPHIC:** Tall grass icon shown.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Protect yourself from tick bites. Highlighted text below: If you find a tick on you, remove it immediately.

**GRAPHIC:** Tick icon shown.

**AUDIO OF ROB TALKING:** *There's always a little bit of risk and I always have a little bit of concern that I accidentally will eat meat and I'll have a reaction. Just something that you've got to be aware of and make sure that you're proactive about.*

**VISUALS:** Rob walks outside to grill hot dogs. He appears again in his living room, then sitting on a porch step.

**TEXT GRAPHICS APPEAR:** Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/alpha-gal-syndrome](http://www.cdc.gov/alpha-gal-syndrome). Blue background highlights the URL. CDC logo below and centered.

**AUDIO:** Music with no lyrics fades out.