

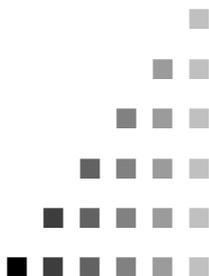
Patient Information Leaflet

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Tick Bites and Lyme Disease

For further information visit

www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk

WHAT ARE TICKS?

Ticks are small, spider-like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. Depending on its development stage, the size of a tick varies. Nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed, while adult ticks look more like tiny spiders.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THEM?

Ticks can survive in many places, but prefer moist areas with dense vegetation or long grass. The species most commonly found on people is *Ixodes Ricinus*, more commonly known as the sheep or deer tick. They are usually found in woodland, grassland, moorland, heathland and some urban parks and gardens.

HOW DO YOU COME IN CONTACT?

Ticks don't jump or fly, but wait until an animal or person brushes past to climb on. They then bite to attach to the skin and start to feed on the blood. It may take several days to complete their blood meal, before they drop off. Ticks can be found throughout the year, but are most active between spring and autumn.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN BITTEN...

- Remove the tick as soon as possible
- The only safe way to remove a tick is to use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or a tick removal tool
- Grab the tick as close to the skin as you can, and gently pull straight up until all parts are removed. Don't worry if any residual parts remain; just observe
- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes

- Wash your hands with soap and water
- Contact the Practice if you notice a pink or red rash around the bite site. Other symptoms can develop after you have been bitten including flu-like symptoms such as headaches, chills, tiredness, muscle pains, joint ache and a temperature of 38C (100.4F) or over (fever). Remember to say you were bitten by a tick as you may need antibiotics to prevent Lyme Disease
- Using petroleum jelly, alcohol or a lit match to remove a tick does NOT work.

HELP FOR PREVENTING TICK BITES

Ticks prefer warm, moist places on your body, especially the groin area, waist, arm pits, behind the knee and along hair lines, so look out for anything as tiny as a freckle or a speck of dirt.

Take these simple steps to avoid coming into contact with ticks:

- Walk on clearly defined paths
- Avoid dense vegetation
- Wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off
- Wear long sleeved tops, trousers tucked into socks, and closed shoes
- Use insect repellent

On pets, use thick repellent collars and tick treatments available from your vet

INFORMATION ON LYME DISEASE

Lyme Disease or *Lyme Borreliosis*, is a bacterial infection spread by infected ticks. Human infection is uncommon, because only a small proportion of ticks have the infection. However, those ticks that may carry *Lyme Disease* are common in the countryside, especially woodlands and parks with deer.