



Lyme Disease

Lyme Disease is a potentially serious bacterial infection transmitted via tick bites.

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures that live in woods and areas with long grass. They can be found all over the UK. Only a small number of ticks are infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. A tick bite can only cause Lyme disease in humans if the tick has already bitten an infected animal

The ticks feed on birds and mammals that carry the bacterium in their blood and then transmit the bacterium to a human when they have a blood meal.

Ticks can jump onto a person walking through or sitting amongst long grass. They can crawl up the skin and like to rest in areas of warmth such as behind the knee, groin, armpits, head (crawl up long hair). The tick needs to be attached to a person for about 24h before the disease can be transmitted.

In the UK, the risk of tick bites is highest from **April to October**, when the ticks are most active. The incubation period is 3–30 days. The first symptom is usually a rash, which spreads from the site of the tick bite. It is not generally painful or itchy. There are often accompanying flu-like symptoms.



Recommendations and action points

- Be 'tick aware' in high risk areas, particularly between April and October, and in areas where the ground is wet (and warm).
- In areas of long grass, wear long trousers tucked into socks, and overall legs over the top of boots.
- Check exposed skin for ticks (they are very small and therefore difficult to see) and remove immediately with a tick hook or tweezers.
- Check clothing and animals for ticks.

TICK REMOVAL

- Use a proprietary tick removal tool (available from vets and pet shops), and follow the instructions provided. These tools will grip the head of the tick without squashing the body.
- The most common type of removal tool available is a 'tick hook' which is designed to be twisted to facilitate removal.
- Ensure the hook is clean prior to use.
- After tick removal, wash the bite site with water and clean with antiseptic if possible, and wash the tool.
- Wash hands thoroughly afterwards.



FURTHER INFORMATION

[Public Health England – Lyme Disease](#)

[NHS Choices – Lyme Disease](#)