



One minute guide to...

TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

Why is it a problem?

A tick is a small blood sucking mite usually active between March and October. It lives on the blood of animals but sometimes it attaches itself to humans. It sits on long grass, woodland and moorland and will wave its legs around until it attaches itself to a host. Ticks do not fly or jump.

In most cases a tick will drop off without being noticed. Occasionally they carry bacteria in their stomach which can cause **Lyme disease**.

Not all ticks carry the bacteria causing the disease and even in those that do, a bite does not mean you will definitely get Lyme disease.

When should you be concerned?

Tick bites aren't usually painful and sometimes only cause a red lump to develop where you were bitten. However, sometimes they may cause swelling, itchiness, blistering or bruising.

Also, not everyone knows when they have been bitten, so consult your GP or call 121 if you detect the following symptoms:

- A red spot around the location of the tick's bite usually 1 to 8 weeks after being bitten. The spot will gradually grow bigger, often with a pale area in the middle (erythema migrans).
- Red spots can also appear at other places on the body where the tick has not bitten.
- Flu-like symptoms can occur such as headache, joint pain, tiredness, swollen glands, and fever.

How to prevent being bitten by a tick:

- keep to footpaths and avoid long grass when out walking
- wear appropriate clothing (a long-sleeved shirt and trousers tucked into your socks)
- wear light-coloured fabrics that may help you spot a tick on your clothes and use insect repellent on exposed skin
- check your skin for ticks and your children's head and neck areas, including their scalp
- make sure ticks are not brought home on your clothes alongside checking that pets do not bring ticks into your home in their fur

If you notice a tick on you, your child or a pet:

- Using tweezers, gently grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull steadily away from the skin without twisting or crushing the tick.
- Wash your skin with water and soap afterwards.
- Apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.
- Should you develop any of the symptoms above (within 4 weeks), see your GP

Further information:

NHS information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>

If you have been travelling in Europe, Asia: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tick-borne-encephalitis/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease>

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Working for Cumberland Council and
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