

## WHAT IS LYME DISEASE?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It can be transmitted to humans via the bite of an infected tick and can affect adults and children. If diagnosed early then treatment with antibiotics is usually successful. Unfortunately Lyme disease symptoms may sometimes be non-specific and difficult to recognise, leading to a delayed or missed diagnosis. Delayed or inadequate treatment may result in long term health problems.

## WHAT ARE TICKS?

Ticks that can cause Lyme disease are found all over Scotland and the UK. They are tiny spider like arachnids, found in grassy and wooded areas, as well as city parks and gardens. Ticks are carried on deer, small mammals and birds. Not all ticks carry borrelia, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, but around 5% of ticks in Scotland are thought to be infected. They can also transmit other bacterial infections and viruses. Tick season is usually between March and October but may last longer. Some ticks in the UK may also carry other diseases such as Anaplasma, Babesia, Rickettsia and Tick-Borne Encephalitis Virus.



## LOOK OUT FOR OUR AWARENESS SIGNS WHEN YOU ARE OUT AND ABOUT!



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## THE LYME RESOURCE CENTRE

The Lyme Resource Centre (LRC) is a Scottish registered charity with a mission to educate the public and health professionals about ticks and tick-borne illnesses such as Lyme disease.

By increasing public awareness we hope to encourage tick bite prevention strategies, timely detection of tick bites, safe removal of ticks and recognition of the early signs of Lyme disease.

Visit our website and follow us on social media to learn more.

[WWW.LYMERESOURCECENTRE.COM](http://WWW.LYMERESOURCECENTRE.COM)



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## TICKS & LYME DISEASE



## HOW TO PREVENT TICK BITES

- The best way to prevent Lyme disease is to avoid being bitten.
- Avoid exposing bare skin. Wear long sleeves and tuck trousers into socks. Light-coloured clothing may help you to see ticks more easily.
- Use an insect repellent which is effective against ticks during hiking or other outdoor activities.
- Treat your clothing with the insect repellent permethrin before you set out if you can.
- Keep to well-maintained paths and avoid walking in long grass.
- Carry a tick removal tool. Tick removal cards can be purchased via our website.
- Check yourself, your children and your pets regularly for ticks and brush off any that are unattached.
- Shower and do a thorough **tick check** after being outside. Don't forget the groin, hairline, behind the ears, and places where ticks are hard to spot.



**Ticks may be tiny. Their bites are painless and may go unnoticed. If left undisturbed a tick may remain attached for several days before dropping off.**

## HOW TO REMOVE A TICK



- Remove the tick carefully and promptly - ideally using a tick removal card or tool or fine toothed tweezers.
- The longer the tick is attached the greater the risk of infection. There is no proven minimum time needed for transmission of infection.
- Don't squeeze the body of the tick when removing it, as this can increase the risk of infection.
- Don't smother the tick with gels, oils or liquids and don't burn it.
- Clean and disinfect the site of the bite with antiseptic and wash your hands with soap and water.
- Kill the removed tick by placing it into a tissue and squashing it. Make sure no fluid touches your hands. Then flush away the tissue or put it in the dustbin.
- A small (less than 2cm) localised area of redness may occur in response to a tick bite but this usually resolves in 3-5 days and is not necessarily an indication of Lyme disease.

## WATCH OUT FOR SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE

The most common early symptoms of Lyme disease usually appear within 3-30 days of the tick bite and may include:

- Erythema migrans (EM) rash (an expanding red/pink/purple rash - occurs in 70% of cases)
- Flu-like symptoms
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Neck stiffness
- Fever and sweats

Facial palsy may occur within weeks or months of the tick bite. Other later symptoms may include neurological or heart problems.

**Erythema Migrans (EM) rash is diagnostic of Lyme disease and needs treatment with antibiotics as soon as possible. A blood test is not required.**

The rash can be misdiagnosed as ringworm, another insect bite or a skin infection.



If you develop a rash or feel unwell in the days, weeks or months following a tick bite or after visiting a place where ticks might be present - take a photo of the rash and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

**A negative blood test does not exclude the diagnosis.**

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng95](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng95)

A second course of antibiotics may be needed if symptoms continue or come back.

For more information on ticks and Lyme disease visit the LRC website: [www.lymeresourcecentre.com](http://www.lymeresourcecentre.com)