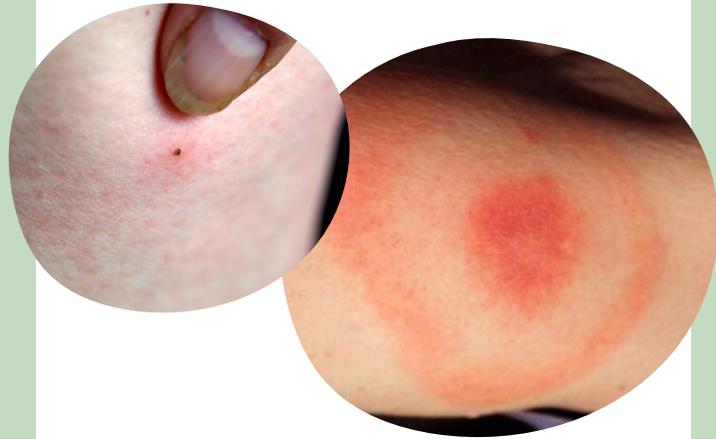


# PREVENTING BITES

Ticks don't jump or fly, but wait until an animal or person brushes past to climb on and feed. Ticks can be removed safely with tweezers or a tick removal tool.



## Avoiding contact with ticks:

- Keep exposed skin to a minimum, wear long sleeves and tuck trousers into socks.
- Wear light coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off.
- Walk on paths, avoid brushing against vegetation.
- Avoid/take care in areas with dense vegetation.
- You can use insect repellents containing DEET.

# BE TICK AWARE

# FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact the Health Protection Team:



[wi.healthprotection@nhs.scot](mailto:wi.healthprotection@nhs.scot)



01851 708033 or 01870 603366



visit: Lyme Disease Action  
[www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk](http://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk)

## WE ARE LISTENING - HOW DID WE DO?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide.

If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff.
- visit our website [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback) or share your story at - [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or 0800 122 31 35.
- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868  
Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Disclaimer The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs. © NHS Western Isles, 2017, 2019, 2021. All rights reserved.

# TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

 **HOW IT'S SPREAD**  
 **WHERE IT'S FOUND**  
 **HOW IT'S PREVENTED**



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar  
NHS Western Isles  
Health Protection Team

**NHS**  
Eileanan Siar  
Western Isles

# IMPORTANCE OF BEING TICK AWARE

Ticks can transmit bacteria and viruses that cause diseases such as Lyme disease. Infected ticks spread disease because bacteria and viruses can pass from the tick during the time they are attached to the animal/human. If you do get bitten, removing the tick quickly and correctly can help reduce any potential risk.

## WHAT ARE THEY?

Ticks are small, blood-sucking creatures which feed on many different types of birds and animals, including humans. During feeding they can cause infections that may lead to diseases. They are found in grassland, moorland and garden areas and are most common from April to October, but can be found at any time of year.

Ticks have a four stage cycle; the minute egg that hatches into a 0.5 mm, six-legged larva followed by a 1 mm, eight-legged nymph and finally the 10 mm engorged female.

Adult females feed for 10 days before laying eggs deep in the undergrowth.

The most likely stage of contracting Lyme disease is in the Nymph stage.



# THEIR DISEASES

Ticks carry many infective agents that can affect animals or humans or both. In Scotland, Lyme disease, also known as Lyme borreliosis, is the most common human disease transmitted by ticks. There are also other tickborne diseases which in the UK mostly affect animals, but that on very rare occasions can also affect humans.

Following a tick bite, if you feel unwell or develop a rash around the site of attachment please consult your GP.

## TICK CHECKS

- Make it a habit - when arriving home, remove your clothes and have a good look and feel for any ticks. Do not to remove clothes in the bedroom, as ticks could remain on carpets/bedding.
- Ticks prefer warm, moist places on your body, especially the groin area, waist, armpits, behind the ear and along the hair line. Look out for anything as tiny as a freckle or speck of dirt.
- Young children are more commonly bitten on the head/scalp so they need to be carefully checked along the neck, behind the ears and along the hairline.
- Although animal to animal/human transfer is very unusual, checking pet bedding is a good idea. It is recommended to wash clothes after a tick check in a 50°C wash cycle (check clothing temperature recommendations first).



# IF YOU ARE BITTEN

## DO:

- remove the tick as soon as possible, ensure the tick is removed by using a pair of fine tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool.
- grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a local infection.
- apply antiseptic to the bite area, or wash with soap and water and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes.
- contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell with flu-like symptoms, joint pains, headache or fever and you were bitten by a tick or have recently spent time outdoors.

## DO NOT:

- squeeze or squash the tick.
- cover the tick with oils, lotions, chemicals or petroleum jelly.
- try to burn the tick off with a lit cigarette end or match as these may increase the likelihood of the tick passing on a disease.

## REMEMBER:

- A rash which spreads out from the bite, resembling a bulls-eye could be the initial sign of Lyme disease.
- If you do visit your GP then remember to tell them you have been bitten by a tick.
- Lyme disease responds well to treatment with antibiotics and is better when treated early.
- There is no need for antibiotics or to see your GP if you have been bitten but have no other symptoms.