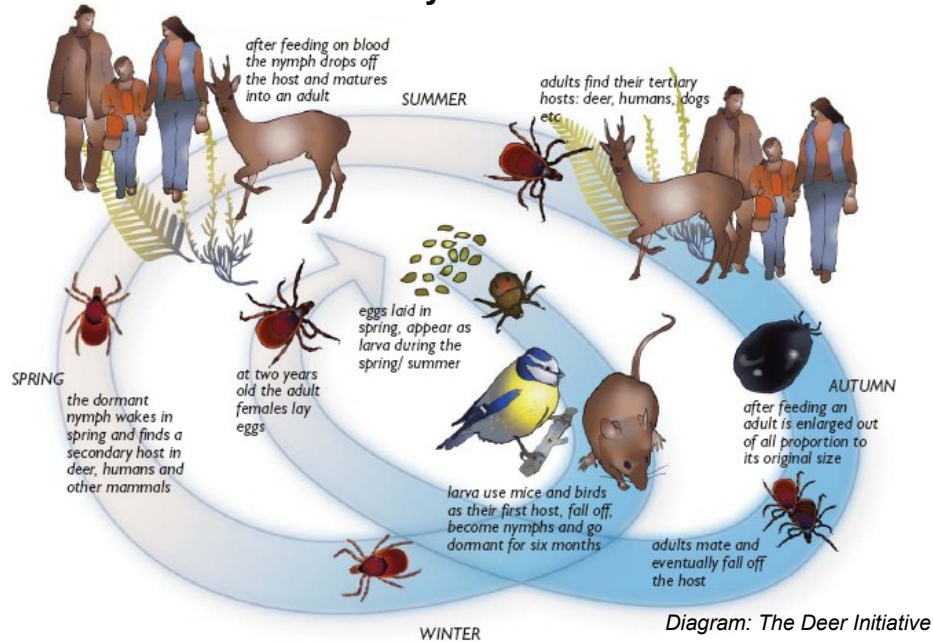


Ticks & Lyme Disease



The Life Cycle Of A Tick



How to Avoid Getting Bitten

If you are likely to be exposed to ticks there are several things you can do to help protect yourself:

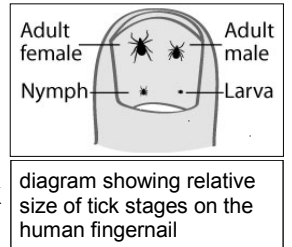
- ✂ Keep arms and legs covered. Wear trousers instead of shorts, preferably made from light-coloured, closely woven, smooth material
- ✂ Wear shoes or boots rather than sandals. Avoid gaps between footwear and trousers (tuck trousers into socks) and wear gaiters if possible
- ✂ Consider using a spray-on insect repellent* (ones containing DEET or permethrin are the most effective) on trouser legs and exposed skin.
- ✂ Inspect your clothing and skin for ticks, they can be brushed off before becoming attached (check your trousers every 20 minutes or so if you are in a tick infested area and brush off any which are crawling on you. Check clothing again before you enter the house)
- ✂ Check again when you undress
- ✂ Wet your hair and carefully check through it with your fingers to make sure there is nothing on your head

* Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not spray on large areas of skin

What are Ticks?

Ticks are tiny, parasitic, spider-like creatures commonly found in woodland, heathland and moorland areas. They feed mainly on the blood of mammals (especially sheep or deer) and birds, but may also feed on humans. Ticks can become infected with the bacteria which causes Lyme disease and pass this to humans. It is estimated that one in three ticks carries the disease.

Humans can be bitten by nymph and adult ticks which have eight legs (larvae only have six). Adults vary in colour from reddish brown to dark brown or black, and differ in size depending on the age and sex of the tick.



When You Are Most At Risk

As well as the areas mentioned above, areas inhabited by deer or livestock are particularly suitable habitats for ticks. Late spring, early summer and autumn are peak times for feeding. Ticks are often found in areas of bracken, long grass, leaf litter and decaying mats of grass and sedges.

Although cold temperatures reduce tick activity, in warmer areas of Britain and during mild weather conditions elsewhere, ticks will be active throughout the year.

Although rarely fatal, Lyme disease is a debilitating condition that can remain in the body for many years and can affect the nerves, joints, heart, higher brain functions and eyes.

NEVER

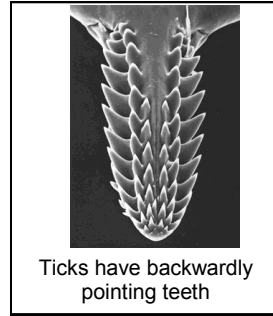
Never cover an attached tick with volatile oils, perfume, alcohol, vaseline, nail varnish, creams, or other chemicals, and never apply heat (e.g. a lit cigarette or match). Do not squash the tick.

If you kill a tick in this way its throat relaxes and allows potentially infected material to be regurgitated into the host and so may increase the risk of transmission of the Borrelia bacteria that can cause Lyme disease.

Symptoms of Lyme Disease

Symptoms may appear between 2 and 30 days after being bitten and may include:

- ✎ Feeling unwell with flu-like symptoms
- ✎ Extreme fatigue
- ✎ Muscle, tendon or joint pain
- ✎ Muscle weakness
- ✎ Stiff neck
- ✎ Headache
- ✎ Disturbances of sight, hearing, digestive system or sleep
- ✎ A bull's eye rash (if you have a rash photograph it as a record). The bull's eye may also appear elsewhere on the body away from the original bite location.



A Bull's Eye Rash Which Can Slowly Spread Out From The Site of the Bite



Sebaceous Cyst On A Leg Formed After The Mouthparts Of A Tick Were Left In The Skin

Handle your clothing carefully

When you come in, place your clothing somewhere warm to dry out, in a hot room or on a hot windowsill. The ticks will dry out and die within 24 hours. This is the safest way to handle your outdoor clothing as ticks can survive a full cycle in the washing machine. They need the dry to die!

DO THE TICK CHECK

Ticks prefer warm, moist, dark areas of the body.

Check the whole body. It may be helpful to have someone else inspect areas that are hard to see, or if you are alone use two mirrors to get a clear view of the places which are hard to see.

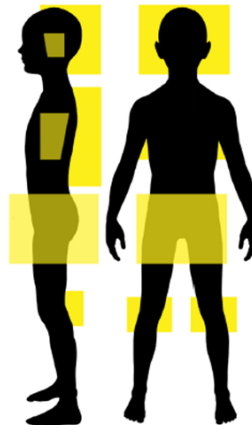
Preferred areas include:

Hidden in: belly button, around or in the ear, hairline and scalp.

Parts that bend: back of knee, elbow, between fingers and toes, underarms.

Pressure points where clothing presses against skin: underwear elastic, belts, collar.

Warm, moist areas: armpits and groin



Feel for bumps and look for tiny brown spots especially in these areas

What To Do If You Have Been Bitten

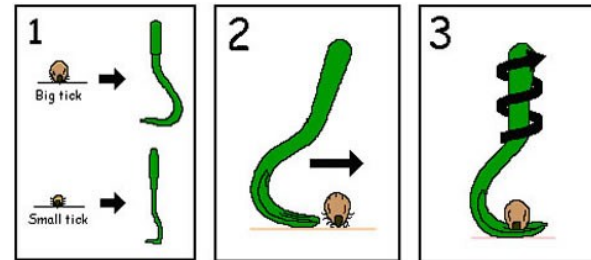
Remove ticks as soon as possible. Removing them within 12 hours significantly reduces the chance of being infected.

Do not panic! Take your time. Use a tick removal tool (supplied in fieldwork first aid kits) to ensure that you do not leave any mouth parts behind. If you do not have a tick removal tool, use fine tipped tweezers and grip as close to the skin as possible and be careful not to squeeze or crush the body of the tick.

Remove the tick in an anti-clockwise motion to ensure the mouth parts are not left in the skin (do not twist if using tweezers).

Clean the bite area afterwards with hot soapy water or an antiseptic wipe to reduce the risk of local infection.

Monitor yourself for the next 4 to 6 weeks and if you develop symptoms immediately see your GP and inform them you have been bitten by a tick and are displaying symptoms of Lyme disease.



ALL TICK BITES RECEIVED WHILST ON BTO WORK (IF YOU ARE BEING PAID FOR BEING THERE) MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY IN THE NEAR MISS BOOK. CONFIRMED CASES OF LYME DISEASE MUST BE REPORTED TO THE H&S OFFICER

To use the tick removal tool, choose the appropriate size and slide the tick into the slit of the tool, keeping it close to the skin. Then gently pull whilst twisting in an anti-clockwise direction and the tick will come out.

If part of the tick breaks off, or you think any part may be left in your skin, see your GP immediately. If possible take the tick with you, folded in sellotape so that it can be sent for analysis. Early treatment with antibiotics will normally prevent the illness developing any further.

*Further information: www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk or lymediseaseuk.com
tickcounter.org is a useful American site*