

## Tick Bites and Lyme Disease – What to do



Ticks are tiny insects that look a bit like spiders. Before they feed, they can be so small that they look like specks of dirt or poppy seeds. They live in **woodland and grassy areas** and bite into skin to feed on blood. Ticks can carry **Lyme disease** although most of them do not.

**What is Lyme Disease?** A bacterial infection that can be effectively treated if detected early but if left untreated can cause severe long-term issues including paralysis and arthritis.

Once a tick has been spotted on the skin it should be **removed as soon as possible**. Infected ticks don't usually spread Lyme disease until after 36 hours. Ideally, removal would be carried out by using a tick remover or by a medical professional. Once removed, the site of the bite should be checked - as a tick can leave its mouthparts in the skin and this can lead to infection.

### What are the signs of Lyme Disease?

The casualty may have a **skin rash** at the site where they were bitten – often described as looking like a bull's-eye. They may have a **headache** and a **fever**. They may experience **muscle and joint pain** and **fatigue**. Often symptoms are described as **flu-like**.

You only need to seek medical help if you have been bitten and you go on to experience any of the above symptoms.



A few simple precautions can help avoid getting a tick bite:

- Avoid walking through long grass
- Wear long trousers and/or pulled up socks
  - Use a repellent such as DEET
- Check for ticks after walking in the countryside – check pets too
  - Remove ticks as soon as you see them

Contact us if you have any other questions about first aid for someone who has been bitten by a tick.