

# Raising awareness of tick bites and Lyme disease



## Why is Tick Bite Prevention An Important Issue for Local Authorities?

The recently published **NICE Quality Standard for Lyme disease** includes the statement, *'Local authorities organise health promotion activities with organisations in their area to raise public awareness about how to prevent Lyme disease.'*

- **Lyme disease is endemic across the United Kingdom**, particularly in woodland or heathland areas but disease carrying ticks can also be found in **cities and gardens**.
- **Awareness in the general public and clinicians is still too low.** Tick bites often go unnoticed. Misdiagnosis or delayed treatment can lead to long-term, debilitating symptoms.
- **Prevention and early treatment is key.**



## When to plan activities

**May is Lyme awareness month** when LDUK and Lyme charities around the world raise awareness of the dangers of tick bites and risk of Lyme disease. Ticks are active in every season and particularly between May and October.

The LDUK **'Wake Up to Lyme'** campaign begins on **Friday 1st May 2020** and runs **throughout the month of May**. Visit [www.lymediseaseuk.com/localauthorities](http://www.lymediseaseuk.com/localauthorities) for further information about the campaign and downloadable resources.



# How Can you Protect your Local Community from Lyme Disease?

- ✓ Add tick bite prevention resources to your **council website**.
- ✓ **Tweet and share social media posts** on tick bite awareness regularly throughout the spring and summer months.
- ✓ Share prevention resources with local **nurseries, schools, forest school providers, youth groups, colleges, community centres and outdoor recreational spaces, pharmacies, hospitals and GP surgeries**.
- ✓ Raise awareness with **CCGs, GPs, school nurses, walk-in centres and A and E departments** including details of; **NICE Lyme disease guideline, RCGP Lyme disease toolkit** and **free 30min LDA/RCGP e-learning module** for health professionals.
- ✓ Take part in **media interviews** and **support charity and patient organised events** on tick bite prevention during Lyme awareness month.
- ✓ Follow the **LDUK Facebook page** and **Twitter feed** for prevention tips throughout our campaign.

## What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a **bacterial infection** usually transmitted by the **bite of an infected tick**. It is the most common tick-borne infectious disease in the northern hemisphere and there are multiple strains of the bacteria.

## How do you catch Lyme disease?

Transmission of Lyme disease can occur when bitten by an infected tick. Other modes of transmission include **congenital transmission** from mother to baby. Although the borrelia bacteria has been found in biting insects such as mosquitoes and spiders, there is not yet enough research to prove that the disease can be transmitted via them.



## What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

Symptoms can start with an **erythema migrans (EM) rash**, often described as a 'bull's-eye rash', which is diagnostic of Lyme disease. However, the rash can also be atypical, which can sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of ringworm or cellulitis. **Not every Lyme disease patient will experience or remember a rash.** Official figures state that the rash appears in two out of every three Lyme patients. There is **no accurate test for Lyme disease** at the moment, meaning false negative results can occur. There is also **no test for cure**.

Symptoms of Lyme disease can include **malaise, unexplained flu-like symptoms, soreness and achiness, light and noise sensitivity, cognitive problems, fatigue, a stiff neck, facial palsy, numbness and tingling.** Left untreated, the infection can spread anywhere in the body and cause **musculoskeletal, cardiac, dermatological, neurological and neuropsychiatric problems.**

