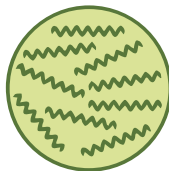


What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a spiral shaped bacteria (spirochaete) which can be passed to humans by the bite of an infected tick. It's usually easier to treat if it's diagnosed early.



What are the symptoms?



A spreading round or oval rash around a tick bite can be an early symptom of Lyme disease.

The rash can appear up to 3 months after being bitten by an infected tick, but usually appears within 1 to 4 weeks.

It can last for several weeks. Not everyone with Lyme disease develops a rash and it may be atypical in appearance.

Initial symptoms can include fatigue, headaches, flu-like illness, facial palsy, migratory muscle and joint pain, nausea, and a stiff neck. Late or missed diagnosis can result in persistent and debilitating symptoms.

The disease can cause widespread symptoms which may be mistaken for other illnesses such as 'summer flu', fibromyalgia, arthritis, myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS) and multiple sclerosis (MS).

Ticks carrying tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) have now been identified in the UK, however the risk is very low. Symptoms include flu-like illness, persistent headache, confusion and sensitivity to bright light.

If you experience these after a tick bite OR after you may have been exposed to a tick bite, then take photos of any rashes and go to see your GP.

If you have been bitten

- Never apply heat, oil or unsuitable products. These can irritate the tick and cause it to spread bacteria into the wound.
- Ideally use a tick remover tool (to avoid squashing the tick) or use fine-tipped tweezers.

How to remove a tick

Using a tick remover tool

Follow the instructions that come with the tool carefully. Packs often contain 3 tools for different sized ticks.



Approach the tick from the side to help cradle the tick securely with the tool. The tick's body is flat when not fed.

Twist the tool slowly in one direction only (clockwise or anticlockwise) as you gently pull back to remove the tick.

The tick should detach after 2-3 rotations.

Using tweezers

Use fine-tipped tweezers, not blunt ones.

Grasp the tick close to the skin. Pull upwards with steady, even pressure. Do not twist, jerk or stress the tick. This can cause mouthparts to break off and the tick may spread fluids that carry infection.

Remove any broken mouthparts with a sterilised needle or tweezer points.

Do not squeeze or crush the body of the tick.

Do not touch the tick with bare hands.

After tick removal

Disinfect the bite site with antiseptic.

Wash your hands with soap and water.

Crush the tick between paper or tissue and flush it down the toilet. Make sure no blood comes in contact with the skin.

Monitor any symptoms, which could be delayed. Consult your GP if you experience flu-like symptoms or a spreading round or oval rash within three months of a tick bite.

Raising awareness

Lyme Disease UK aims to prevent cases of Lyme disease by raising awareness of the importance of tick bite prevention, and what to do if you are bitten by a tick.

We want to help UK Lyme patients access timely and appropriate treatment to reduce the risk of long term complications and symptoms.

Current tests cannot rule out Lyme disease. Research is needed to improve testing and treatment protocols.

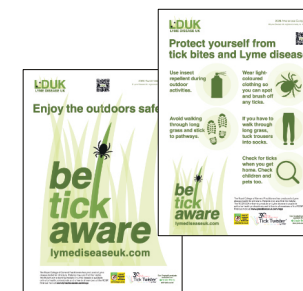


How you can help

- ✓ Encourage your GP and health professionals to review the RCGP Lyme disease toolkit and e-learning module for clinicians. Visit www.lymediseaseuk.com/rcgp



- ✓ Display LDUK leaflets and posters in your local community (GP surgeries, pharmacies, outdoor recreation areas, supermarkets etc.)



Dead or live ticks can be sent to the UK Health Security Agency's Tick Surveillance Scheme. Details will be added to a database. Check online instructions carefully for your safety.

The UKHSA does not routinely test ticks to discover if they are carrying infections.

www.gov.uk/guidance/tick-surveillance-scheme