

What if I have been bitten?

Don't panic! Even if you are bitten by a tick it doesn't always mean you will get ill, as not all ticks carry diseases. Just make sure the tick is removed as quickly as possible and in the right way.

If you get a rash or you feel ill after a tick bite, see your doctor straight away.

How do you remove a tick?

The best way to remove a tick is to use a special tool which hooks underneath the tick. Twist the tool as you pull to help break the grip.

Or fine pointed tweezers can be used. Hold the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull firmly upwards without twisting.

DO NOT try to pull a tick out with your fingers! You might squeeze the contents of the tick into your body, which is more likely to make you ill.

DO NOT try to burn the tick or cover it with vaseline or any other creams or chemicals.

DO disinfect the area around the bite using antiseptic cream.



Be smart and be aware!

- Keep your arms and legs covered when walking in woodland and similar places.
- Check for ticks regularly when you are outside and when you get home.
- Insect repellants containing a chemical called DEET will help to keep ticks away.
- Wearing light coloured clothes makes it easier to see ticks and brush them off before they bite.
- If you find a tick attached, remove it quickly and in the proper way.

FACT: Ticks can carry other diseases as well. These include BABESIA, BARTONELLA and EHRLICHIA. An infected tick can give you more than one infection at the same time!

There is more information on our website at www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk

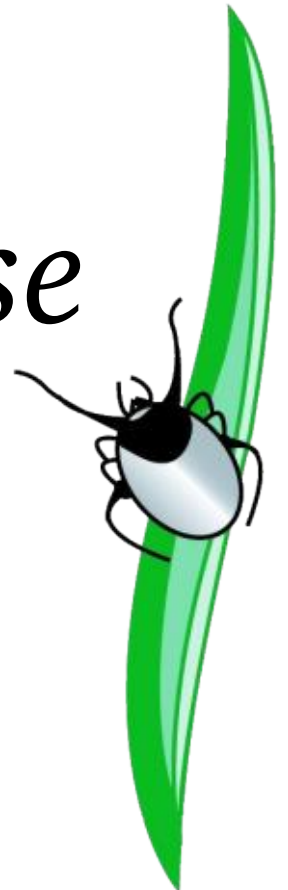
Or write to us at

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Ticks and Lyme disease



What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a bacterium called *BORRELIA BURGDORFERI*. It belongs to a family of bacteria called *SPIROCHAETES*, because of their spiral shape.

This is a highly magnified image of a group of *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria.



What are the symptoms?

Some people, but not all, get a circular red rash that spreads out from the bite. Later, you might feel ill. You might get,

- headaches
- stomach upsets
- feeling very tired
- pains in muscles and joints
- numbness or tingling feelings



What are ticks?

Ticks have eight legs, so they are not insects, but are *ARACHNIDS*, so they are related to spiders, mites and scorpions. They go through four stages in their life cycle.



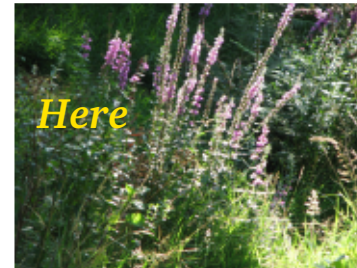
Egg Larva Nymph Adult male Adult female



This is a fully engorged adult female tick, which is about the size of a pea. Its body has stretched and is full of blood.

Where are ticks found?

Ticks can be found all over Britain. They like to live in places with deep vegetation and lots of small animals and birds they can feed on. This can include woods, moors, and even parks and gardens.



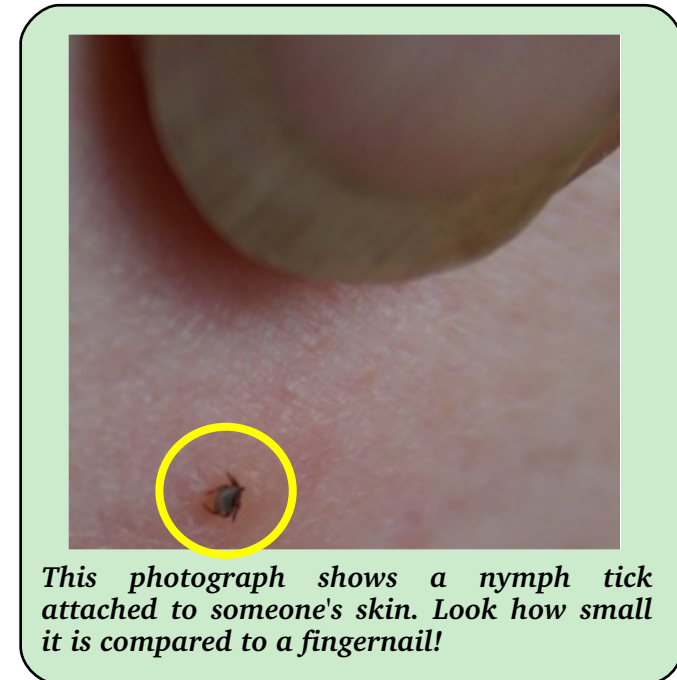
This is the unpleasant bit!

To be able to grow from one stage to the next the tick has to feed. It does this by climbing a leaf or stalk, then waiting for an animal to brush past. The tick has hooks on its front legs so that it hangs on to the animal. The tick's mouth is like a hollow needle (the proper name is *HYPOSTOME*). It sticks this into the animal's skin and slowly drinks its blood, like sucking a drink through a straw.



This is a highly magnified photograph of a tick's mouthparts, showing the barbed hypostome in the middle.

The tick may stay attached for a several days. When it has finished feeding it drops off, and burrows into the ground to change to the next stage in its life cycle.



This photograph shows a nymph tick attached to someone's skin. Look how small it is compared to a fingernail!