

## What if I have been bitten?

Don't panic! Even if you are bitten by a tick it doesn't 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 in the first six weeks or so 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. Some tools, like one shown, are designed to be twisted as you pull to help break the grip.



Fine pointed tweezers can be used instead. Hold the tick as close to your 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, after you remove the tick.

Tick removers can be bought from our website or from most vets.

## 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 chemicals called DEET or Picaridine will help keep ticks away.
- Light coloured clothes make it easier to see ticks and brush them off.
- If you find a tick attached, remove it quickly and in the proper way.

**FACT:** ticks can carry other germs as well. These include *Babesia*, *Bartonella* and *Ehrlichia*. An infected tick can give you more than one infection at the same time!

## Further Information

All our leaflets are available free of charge from our website where you can find out more about Lyme disease, including links to many other resources.

[www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk](http://www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk)

Leaflets are also available from:

Lyme Disease Action,  
PO Box 235, Penryn. TR10 8WZ. UK

Including a donation/SAE will help us in our work for people affected by Lyme disease.

Please don't bin this leaflet - pass it on.

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# LDA

Lyme Disease Action

# Ticks and Lyme Disease



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## What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* (pronounced bore-EL-ee-uh burg-DOR-fer-rye). They belong to a family of bacteria called Spirochaetes (SPY-roe-keets), because of their spiral shape.

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



## What happens when you get Lyme disease?

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

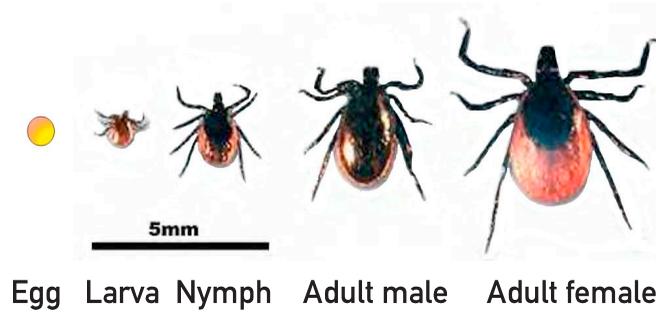
- headaches
- stomach upsets
- feeling very tired
- pains in muscles and joints
- numbness or tingling feelings

Some people only have mild symptoms, but others can be very ill.



## What are ticks?

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

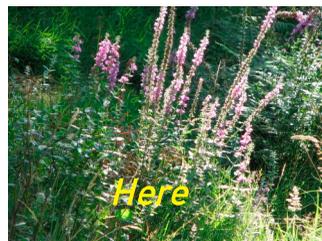


This is a fully engorged adult female tick, which is about the size of a pea. Its body has stretched and is full of blood.

## Where are ticks found?

They like to live in places with deep vegetation and lots of small animals and birds they can feed on.

Ticks can be found in woodland, moors, and even parks and gardens all over Britain.



## So how does a tick feed?

To be able to grow from one stage to the next, the tick has to feed. It climbs a leaf or stalk, then waits 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 barbs help the tick to stay firmly attached.

The tick might stay attached for 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!