


GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT 25: LYME DISEASE

ACTIVITY ASSESSED	ASSESSMENT DATE	
LYME DISEASE page 1 of 2	DEC 2021	
ACTIVITY LOCATION	DATE FOR RE-ASSESSMENT	ASSESSED BY
persons at risk: all volunteers; especially young persons		GRASSROOTS
risk level: generally moderate except as indicated		

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION	Extract from NHS on-line advice page last reviewed: 05 July 2021
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What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that can be spread to humans by infected ticks. It is usually easier to treat if it's diagnosed early.

Symptoms of Lyme disease

A circular or oval shape rash around a tick bite can be an early symptom of Lyme disease in some people.

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.

The rash can have a darker or lighter area in the centre and might gradually spread. It's not usually hot or itchy.

The rash may be flat, or slightly raised, and look pink, red, or purple when it appears on white skin. It can be harder to see the rash on brown and black skin and it may look like a bruise.



The rash may look like a bullseye on a dartboard.



Sometimes the edges of the rash may feel slightly raised.

Some people also get flu-like symptoms a few days or weeks after they were bitten by an infected tick, such as:

- a high temperature, or feeling hot and shivery
- headache
- muscle and joint pain
- tiredness and loss of energy

Other symptoms of Lyme disease

Some people with Lyme disease develop more severe symptoms months or years later.

This is more likely if treatment is delayed.

These more severe symptoms may include:

- pain and swelling in joints
- nerve problems – such as pain or numbness
- heart problems
- trouble with memory or concentration


The chance of getting Lyme disease

Not all ticks carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

It is still important to be aware of ticks and to remove them safely as soon as possible, just in case.

Ticks that may cause Lyme disease are found all over the UK, but high-risk places include grassy and wooded areas in southern and northern England and the Scottish Highlands

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Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures that live in woods, areas with long grass, and sometimes in urban parks and gardens. They are found all over the UK. Ticks do not jump or fly. They attach to the skin of animals or humans that brush past them. Once a tick bites into the skin, it feeds on blood for a few days before dropping off.

How to avoid tick bites

To reduce the chance of being bitten:

- cover your skin while walking outdoors and tuck your trousers into your socks
- use insect repellent on your clothes and skin – products containing DEET are best
- stay on clear paths whenever possible
- wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to see and brush off
- check for ticks the end of the working day and at home; ticks can crawl into/under clothing

How to spot and remove ticks

Important

Tick bites are not always painful. You may not notice a tick unless you see it on your skin.

Regularly check for ticks on your clothes and skin, and on children and pets after being outdoors.

To remove a tick safely:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick-removal tool. You can buy these from some pharmacies, vets and pet shops.
2. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
3. Slowly pull upwards, taking care not to squeeze or crush the tick. Dispose of it when you have removed it.
4. Clean the bite with antiseptic or soap and water.

The chance of getting ill is low. You do not need to do anything else unless you notice a rash or become unwell.

Non-urgent advice:

See a GP if:

- you've been bitten by a tick or visited an area in the past 3 months where infected ticks could be and you have:
 - flu-like symptoms – such as feeling hot and shivery, headaches, aching muscles or feeling sick, or
 - a round or oval shape rash

Tell them if you have recently been in forests or grassy areas.

What happens at your appointment

The GP will ask about your symptoms and consider any rash or recent tick bites you know about.

Lyme disease can be difficult to diagnose. It has similar symptoms to other conditions and there's not always an obvious rash.