

## I've been bitten by a tick, what should I do?

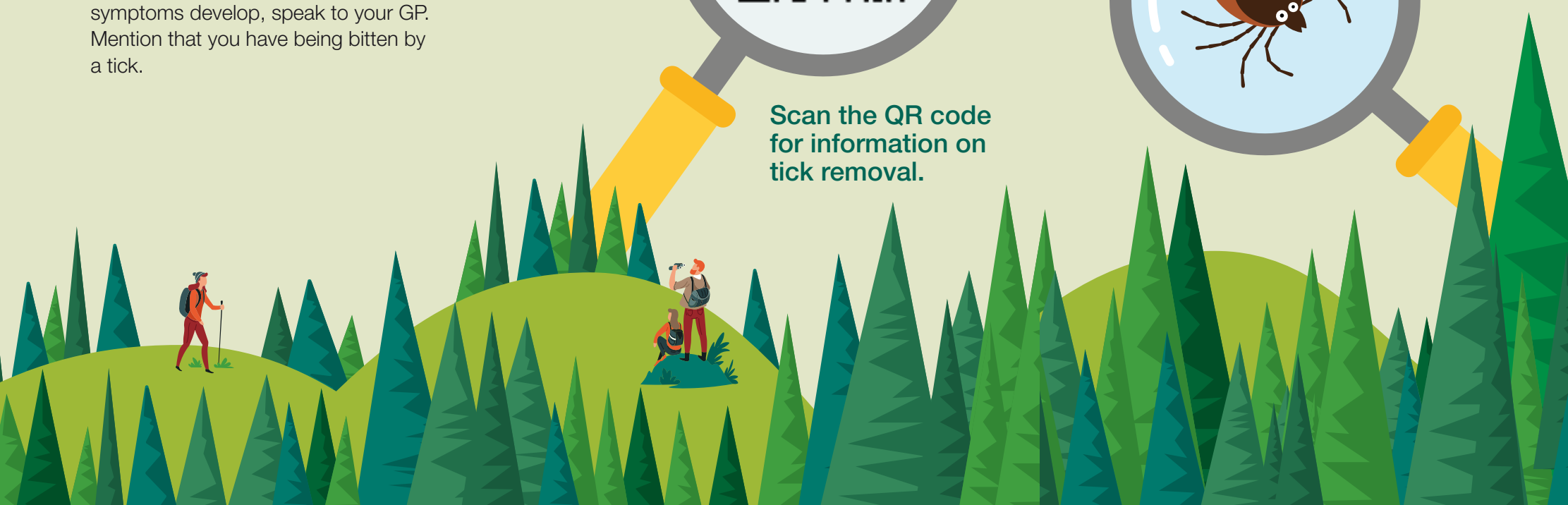
1. Don't panic. Ticks rarely pass on infection in the first 24 hours. If the tick is removed quickly, you are very unlikely to become infected.
2. Remove the tick (ideally with a tick-removal tool or fine-tipped tweezers or) by gripping it close to the skin. Wash the area with soap and water.
3. If any of the mouthparts of the tick are left behind, remove as much as possible with tweezers.
4. Check the bite over the next few weeks for a rash. Initial redness and swelling the same day are normal and do not indicate infection.
5. If a rash, flu-like illness or other symptoms develop, speak to your GP. Mention that you have being bitten by a tick.



## Protecting yourself against Tick Bites and Lyme Disease



Scan the QR code for information on tick removal.



## What causes Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is caused by a bug called *Borrelia burgdorferi* which is spread by ticks. Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures, which range in size from a pin head to a poppy seed. They are most at home in woodland, heathland, moorland and other grassy areas, both rural and urban, where they feed on the blood of mammals (e.g. deer and sheep) and birds.

## Who is at risk?

Ramblers, campers, mountain bikers, and people who work and walk in forested/grassy areas are at greatest risk of tick bites and developing Lyme disease, but even in these groups, the risk is low.

## When are ticks most likely to bite me?

Ticks are active all year, but they are most active between March and November. Tick bites tend to occur on the arms and legs of adults, and on the head and neck of children.



Erythema migrans rash  
Image credit: James Gathany/CDC

## What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

Most symptoms of Lyme disease are mild, the first often being a rash that can appear 3 to 30 days after a tick bite. It starts as a small red dot but may grow larger with time. The centre of the spot often fades to a “bull’s-eye” pattern.

Other symptoms include fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain. Occasionally, temporary facial paralysis (Bell’s palsy), can appear 7 and 21 days after a tick bite. More rarely, severe infection of the heart, joints or the nervous system can occur.

## Preventing Lyme disease

### Tips to avoid tick bites

1. Keep to the middle of paths/trails; avoid overgrowth.
2. Protect yourself: hat, shoes (not sandals/bare feet), long-sleeved shirt, long trousers tucked in.
3. Insect repellents with DEET are very effective. Follow the manufacturers’ guidelines.
4. Make regular tick checks of yourself (and your children).
5. After being out, check yourself (and your children) for ticks. Check hair and skin, especially arms, legs, groin, backs of knees, torso and neck. And the head, neck and hairline of children. Check closely – ticks are small and easy to miss.
6. Don’t forget to check your pets (especially dogs) for ticks.
7. If you find a tick, remove it as described, and consult your GP if symptoms develop.

