



Tick-borne diseases

In the days following a tick bite, you should watch out for symptoms of tick-borne diseases to be on the safe side.

In Ireland, a tick-borne disease to be aware of is Lyme borreliosis which manifests itself with the following symptoms:

- Reddish skin rash in a ring shape around the bite
- Flu-like symptoms such as fever, tiredness and headache
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Please contact your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms within 30 days after the bite. Most cases of Lyme borreliosis can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics. However, if left untreated, the disease can infect the heart, joints and nervous system.



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Tick-borne diseases in Europe

Tick-borne disease can be found almost all over Europe with some diseases being more prevalent in certain regions.

Before travelling abroad, consult the websites of the national health authorities to enquire about

Whether tick-borne diseases are a risk in the region you are travelling to and ask your doctor regarding necessary precautionary measures, especially if you plan to engage in outdoors activities (camping, hiking, hunting, lake or river fishing, etc.) during your visit.

Health Protection Surveillance Centre
www.hpsc.ie



For more information on Lyme disease, please consult the HPSC website www.hpsc.ie

Lyme borreliosis

Protect yourself against >>



Ticks can pass on serious diseases



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Ticks are very small and live on the blood of mammals, reptiles and birds. As they feed, they can pick up bacteria or viruses naturally carried by these animals.

Ticks can also bite humans who pass through their living environment, there is a risk that ticks may transfer infections into your bloodstream. This can cause serious disease.

In Europe, tick-borne disease to be aware of include: Tick-borne encephalitis, Lyme borreliosis, tick-borne relapsing fever and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.



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About ticks

Ticks move by walking on the ground and up plants. They latch on to a passing animal or human hosts by using hooks on their legs.

Illustration is only indicative. Sizes can change considerably depending on tick species.

Ticks life cycles go through 4 life stages: egg larva, nymph and adult. During the last 3 stages, the tick may bite and transmit infectious diseases.

To the naked eye, the larvae look like specks of soot, while nymphs are slightly larger (pinhead or poppy seed size). Adult ticks have 8 legs and are the size of small spiders. The adult ticks can also vary in colour, from reddish brown to black. Once fed, a female quickly fills to the size of a pea as its body fills with blood.

For more information on Lyme disease please consult the HPSC website: www.hpsc.ie



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⦿ Risk areas

Ticks are second only to mosquitoes for carrying disease to humans. Due to various factors, there are now more ticks in many parts of Ireland and Europe.

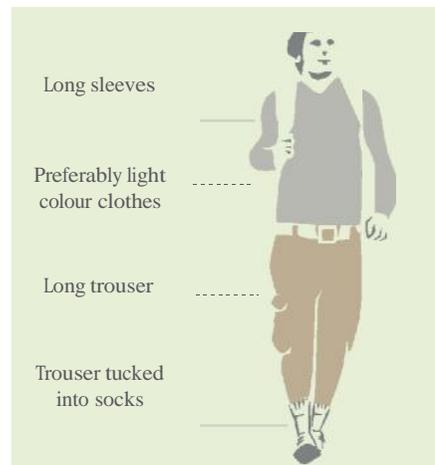
In Ireland, a tick-borne disease to be aware of is Lyme borreliosis which can occur in areas where infected ticks that

transmit the disease are found. Ticks thrive in shady and humid woodland, clearings with grass, open fields and bushes. They live in both rural and urban locations. Heath and woodland areas pose the greatest risk of ticks.

🐜 Preventive measures

Tick-borne diseases can be prevented by avoiding tick bites: use insect repellents and protective clothing, such as long trousers and boots, when venturing into an area where ticks are likely to be present.

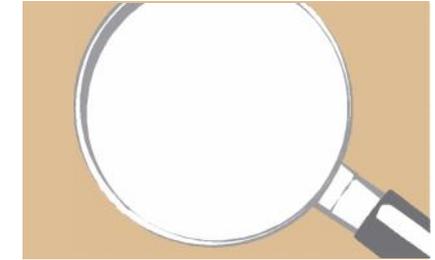
Early and correct removal of ticks is another important measure. There is a lower risk of infection if a tick is detected and removed quickly. So it is important to check yourself, your children and your pets after having visited places where ticks may be present.



+ How to detect and remove ticks

After having been outdoors in areas where ticks may live, check your clothes as well as your body for ticks, paying particular attention to the armpits, groin, legs, navel, neck and head. On children, ticks are often found on the head at the hairline. As ticks are very small, they can easily be overlooked.

A magnifying glass may be helpful.



A tick bite usually looks like a dark lump with a small scab on the skin which cannot be brushed away. Usually, it does not hurt. Still, the tick should be removed as soon as possible in order to minimise the risk of transfer of bacteria or virus. It is important to remove the whole tick without breaking off the lower body to avoid the head remaining stuck in the wound.

The tick should be removed with tweezers, as close to your skin as possible, pulling carefully and consistently without jerking or twisting.

Be careful not to squeeze the tick's body, and do not apply heat or any substances to the tick, as this may cause it to empty its stomach contents into the wound, which causes bacteria or virus transfer.



Still using the tweezers, wrap the tick in some toilet paper and flush it down the toilet.



Finally, wash your wound with warm water and soap and apply antiseptic, like alcohol or iodine, to the area.

A small part of the tick's mouth may remain in the wound. This is not dangerous and it will disappear after a couple of days along with the wound.

However, if the lesion does not start to resolve after a couple of days, you should see a medical professional as this may indicate an infection (rare).