

Public Health Hampshire

Be Tick Aware

Communications Toolkit for partner organisations



This pack contains information that you can use to drive awareness locally of the risk presented by ticks. It includes consistent messaging for use by partners in your own communications.

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Key aim

To educate the public regarding tick exposure and the potential health risks and to promote the adoption of preventative behaviours such as sticking to pathways and wearing long sleeves and trousers. To raise awareness of:

- what ticks are, what they look like and the health risks of tick bites
- where you might be exposed to ticks and how to avoid bites
- how to carry out regular tick checks
- how to safely remove ticks
- how to spot symptoms of Lyme disease

Target audiences

- Hampshire residents
- Pet owners
- Visitors to Hampshire
- Outdoor workers, for example, countryside rangers
- Local communities
- Schools

Key messages

- Be tick aware in spring and summer
- Stick to designated pathways when out walking
- Where practical, wear long light-coloured trousers tucked into socks when out walking
- Use an insect repellent
- Do a tick check during and after walking – do the same for children and pets
- If you are bitten by a tick, remove it promptly and safely with tweezers or a tick removal tool
- Disinfect the bite
- Look out for signs of Lyme disease
- Contact your GP if you think you have symptoms of Lyme disease

FAQs

What are ticks?

Ticks are small spider-like insects which usually live in areas of dense vegetation such as woodland, grassland and moorland where there are host animals, such as deer, that they can feed on. They can sometimes also be found in urban parks and gardens.

Why do they pose a danger?

Ticks feed on the blood of a host animal or human, dropping off when full, but they can stay attached for days if not removed. Some ticks may carry Lyme disease bacteria from an infected animal and transmit it to a human which can have health consequences if not treated.

How can I avoid tick bites?

Wear long trousers tucked into socks when on country walks, wear light coloured clothes to make ticks easier to find and stick to designated pathways. You can also use an insect repellent. Carry out a tick check each time after outdoor activities.

When are ticks active?

Ticks are more active in spring and summer months.

What should I do if I find a tick on myself or my pet?

Use the correct removal procedure to avoid any part of the tick being left in the skin. You can buy a removal tool from a pharmacy or vet or use fine-tipped tweezers, grasping the tick as close to the skin as possible and moving slowly upwards. Dispose of the tick.

Follow up by using an antibacterial wipe.

What are the symptoms of Lyme Disease?

Symptoms may include tiredness and mild flu-like symptoms (fever and headache) and sometimes (but not always) a characteristic bulls-eye red rash.

If left untreated, at a later stage it can affect the joints, nervous system or the heart.

There is no vaccine so regular tick checks and prompt removal are the most effective approach to reducing risk.

When to get medical help

The risk of Lyme disease is low and you don't need to contact your GP unless you become unwell.

Symptoms include:

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

Social media messaging

If you have social media accounts you can build awareness to your target audiences.

On Twitter and Instagram, use the hashtags #tickawareness and #betickaware. There are a range of images available via the PHE link below which you can add to your social media posts.

Here are some sample social media posts for you to use:

- #BeTickAware ticks are small spider-like insects that attach themselves to animals and humans and can transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeTickAware in spring and summer! If you get bitten by a tick, remove it quickly and correctly to reduce risk of infection #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeTickAware walk on paths, avoid dense vegetation and wear light coloured clothes so ticks can be seen and removed #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeTickAware in spring and summer. Ticks climb up vegetation and wait for a passing host, using sensory organs to detect body heat #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>

- #BeTickAware look out for ticks if walking in dense vegetation, woodlands, grassy areas or moorlands #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- Ticks are carried by wildlife hosts such as deer, small mammals, foxes, badgers and birds. Look out for ticks on you, your kids and pets #TickAwareness #BeTickAware <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- Carry out a #TickCheck after outdoor activities: look and feel for attached ticks on you, your family and pets #TickAwareness #BeTickAware <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- Tick activity increases in spring and summer, when tick bite risk is highest #TickAwareness #BeTickAware <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- Spring is a great time to be outside, but don't forget to #BeTickAware; get tips on how to avoid bites <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeTickAware by knowing what ticks look like, where they can be found and how to avoid bites #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeTickAware if you get a tick bite, remove the tick quickly and correctly to reduce any potential risk of infection #TickAwareness <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #TickAwareness remove ticks with fine-tipped tweezers, grip the head as close to the skin as possible and pull upwards, then disinfect #BeTickAware <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #MythBust: don't burn ticks or cover in Vaseline as they may regurgitate stomach contents and cause infection #TickAwareness #BeTickAware <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- The most common human disease transmitted by ticks is #LymeDisease. To stay safe #BeTickAware. If you are bitten #BeLymeAware and act quickly <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeLymeAware a common early sign of #LymeDisease is a circular rash that can look like a bulls-eye. The rash may enlarge over days/weeks. <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>

- #BeLymeAware tell your GP if you feel unwell after spending time in woodland, heath, parks or gardens where ticks could live <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>
- #BeLymeAware not everyone gets a bulls-eye rash, sometimes #LymeDisease may feel like mild flu or sharp/prickly nerve pain <https://bit.ly/2lawEfY>

Sample press release

Enjoy the outdoors but beware of ticks

With [spring/summer] temperatures bringing everyone into the sunshine, [Hampshire County Council/organisation name] is stepping up its advice to adults and children to be 'tick aware' while spending time outdoors.

[Spokesperson], [job title or position] said, "Ticks are often found in wooded areas or long grass and they can easily attach themselves to an animal or person as they brush by. They may be tiny but they can transmit bacteria that cause diseases, such as Lyme disease, so it's important to cover up and be on the lookout for bites."

Ticks are found in moist areas of dense vegetation in woodland, grassland, moorland, heathland and some urban parks and gardens. They can be found throughout the year but are most active between spring and autumn.

Keeping to footpaths and avoiding long grass when out walking is the best way to avoid being bitten by ticks. Other advice to walkers in wooded or heath areas known to have a high tick population such as the New Forest is to:

- Wear appropriate clothing (a long-sleeve shirt and trousers tucked into your socks)
- Use an insect repellent
- Make sure that ticks are not brought home on your clothes - wearing light coloured fabrics that may help you spot a tick on your clothes
- Inspect your skin for ticks, particularly at the end of the day, including your head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin and waistband)
- Check your children's head and neck areas, including their scalp (skin on top of their head)
- Check that pets do not bring ticks into your home in their fur

If you do get bitten by a tick, removing it quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk of infection. The only safe way to remove a tick is to use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or an easy-to-use device which can be purchased from vets and pharmacies. Then:

- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a local infection
- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes

- Contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell or develop a circular rash, often called a bull's-eye rash, and remember to tell them that you were bitten by a tick

Visit [NHS Choices](#) for more information on signs, symptoms and treatments for Lyme disease.

-ENDS-

Further information:

[NHS Choices](#)

PHE [toolkit and accompanying poster, leaflet](#) and [images](#) can be used to support you in promoting tick awareness

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