



## Infection Prevention Team Newsletter April 2026

### **As spring is now here and early summer approaches - watch out for ticks!**

Ticks in the northern hemisphere may carry a bacteria known as *Borrelia burgdorferi*, this can be passed to humans via a tick bite. The most common time of year for this to happen is in spring to early summer, when walking in grassy areas or woodland. As a result, **Lyme disease** can develop (also known as Lyme Borreliosis). There are an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 cases in the UK per year, 85% of which are acquired in the UK. Not all ticks will carry the bacteria, so being bitten does not necessarily mean you will become infected. Potentially ticks can be carried into care homes on domestic pets and also on livestock during special events such as lamb feeding.

Most common sign:

**Rash:** 70-80% of infected individuals will develop a classic 'bullseye' rash within 1-4 weeks of being bitten. But may take up to 3 months to appear.

The rash may appear as a large ring, circular or oval shaped rash around the tick bite site. This may be red, pink or purple on white skin. However, it may be more difficult to see on black or brown skin and may appear more like a bruise.



### **Symptoms:**

- Flu-like illness, fever, chills
- Headache, neck pain or stiffness
- Muscle and joint pain
- Fatigue / tiredness / low energy
- Dizziness

### **Left untreated:**

- Paralysis of face muscles (one side, Bell's palsy)
- More serious issues involving the heart, eyes and nervous system.

Symptoms may linger on, sometimes for months to years if not treated early....

... If you think that you may have Lyme disease contact your GP as soon as possible. The earlier antibiotic treatment is started the more effective it will be. Antibiotics may be required for up to 28 days. It is important to complete the full course.

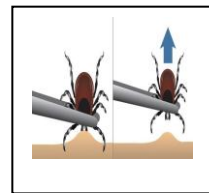


### **Preventing Lyme disease**

- Cover skin whilst walking outdoors, tuck trousers into socks and wear long sleeve tops.
- Use insect repellent (DEET is best)
- Stay on clear paths
- Wear light coloured clothes so that ticks can be seen more easily and brushed off.
- Tick bites don't usually hurt so be vigilant and check for them on your skin.

### **Remove ticks**

Safely remove ticks as soon as possible, preferably using tweezers. Grasp the tick as near to the skin as possible and slowly pull upwards. Be careful not to squeeze or crush the tick. Wash with soap and water or use an antiseptic wipe. Be aware to watch out for the development of a rash or other symptoms described.



[IPC@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:IPC@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

[Lyme disease: signs and symptoms - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/health-topics/lyme-disease)