Lyme Disease and Tick Bites

What is Lyme Disease?

LYME DISEASE (LD)
Is caused by a bacterium Borrelia burgdorferi

SPREAD BY
The bite of a tick (a tiny spider-like creature)

TICKS ARE FOUND
In woodland, moorland and other grassy areas in moist undergrowth

WHO IS AT RISK?
Ramblers, campers, mountainbikers, and people who work and walk in forested/grassy areas

HOW COMMON IS LD IN IRELAND
The true incidence is not known, recent estimates suggest a minimum of 50 -100 cases per year

SYMPTOMS OF LD
A rash (in 80-90% of cases) – erythema migrans appears 3-30 days after bite

Other symptoms include fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain.
The heart and nervous system can become affected in severe cases.

Protecting yourself against Tick Bites

AVOID TICK BITES
1. Wear long trousers, long sleeved shirt and shoes
2. Consider using an insect repellent
3. After your day out, check skin, hair and warm skinfolds (especially the neck and scalp of children)
4. If you find a tick, remove it (see below) - consult your GP if symptoms develop

TICK BITES - WHAT TO DO
1. Only a minority of ticks carry infection. If removed within a few hours, your risk of infection is low
2. Remove the tick (with tweezers) by gripping it close to the skin. Wash with soap and water
3. Remove any mouthparts with tweezers
4. Over the next few weeks check the area for swelling/redness
5. If a rash/other symptoms develop, see your GP and report the tick bite

Erythema migrans skin rash

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