

# 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.

Photo courtesy of CDC/James Gathany



Erythema migrans skin rash

## 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



Health Protection Surveillance Centre

25-27 Middle Gardiner Street Dublin 1 Ireland  
Tel +353 1 876 5300 Fax +353 1 856 1299  
Email [hpsc@hse.ie](mailto:hpsc@hse.ie) [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)