

However, if you do get bitten, removing the tick quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk.

Removal of ticks is not easy and can result in the mouthparts breaking. To prevent a localised infection, clean the area with antiseptic and, if possible, remove the remaining mouthparts with sterilised tweezers or a needle. If it is not possible to remove the mouthparts, do not worry, as the skin's natural sloughing process will expel any foreign objects over time.

Help us record ticks

For more information on British ticks or the Public Health England tick surveillance scheme, as well as how to take part and download a recording form to post with your specimens, visit the website: www.gov.uk/phe or email tick@phe.gov.uk

This work has been supported by Public Health England, whose mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and to address inequalities.

You can contact Wiltshire Council in the following ways:

Telephone: **0300 456 0100**

Web: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Information about Wiltshire Council services can be made available on request in other languages and formats such as **large print** and audio. Please contact the council by telephone **0300 456 0100**, or email customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

D15_54 CH/April 14

Be tick aware

General information about ticks and tick bite prevention



What are ticks?

Ticks are small, spider-like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. Depending on its development stage, the size of a tick varies.

Nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed, while adult ticks look more like tiny spiders.



Where do you find ticks?

Ticks can survive in many places, but prefer areas with dense vegetation or long grass. The species most commonly found on people is *Ixodes ricinus*, more commonly known as the sheep or deer tick. They are usually found in woodlands, grassland, moorland, some urban parks and gardens.

How do you come into contact with ticks?

Ticks don't jump or fly, but wait until an animal or person brushes past to climb on. They then bite to attach to the skin and start to feed on the blood.

It may take the tick up to several days to complete its blood meal, before dropping off. Ticks can be found throughout the year, but are most active between spring and autumn.

Main health risks

Ticks can transmit bacteria that cause diseases such as Lyme Disease, which can lead to very serious conditions if left untreated. Symptoms of Lyme Disease can include a circular rash, fatigue, and muscle and joint pain.

More serious conditions such as viral-like meningitis, facial palsy, nerve damage and arthritis can develop without treatment, so prevention and early detection are crucial. Lyme Disease can be treated with a course of antibiotics.

Perform a tick check!

Make it a habit to check your clothes and your body regularly for ticks when you're outdoors and again when you get home. Because it doesn't hurt, you may not notice you've been bitten, so make sure you check yourself, your children and your pets thoroughly.

Ticks prefer warm, moist places on your body, especially the groin area, waist, arm pits, behind the knee and along hair lines, so look out for anything as tiny as a freckle or a speck of dirt. Young children are more commonly bitten around the head, so be extra careful to check around the neck, behind the ears, and on the scalp.



Take simple steps to avoid coming into contact with ticks

- walk on clearly defined paths
- avoid dense vegetation
- wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off
- use repellents such as DEET.

If you have been bitten

Be tick aware by knowing what ticks look like, where they can be found, and by practising prevention that will help you to avoid tick bites. However, if you do get bitten, removing the tick quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk.

- Remove the tick as soon as possible
- Use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or a tick removal tool.
- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a localised infection.



- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes.
- Do not remove a tick by burning, covering with Vaseline or other substances. These methods may delay prompt removal, increasing the chance of infection.
- Contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell and remember to tell them you were bitten by a tick.

Ticks insert a feeding tube, called a hypostome, into the skin which is covered in backward facing barbs.