



# Infrastructure Projects Southern Toolbox Talk

## Lyme Disease

28 March 2019

### Lyme Disease



Lyme disease is a bacterial infection, passed on to humans by infected ticks. While it's difficult to estimate the total number of UK cases, they are understood to have increased more than fourfold in the past 10 years. The peak season is **April to October, though they are active all year.**

### What are the symptoms?

- A high temperature or feeling hot and shivery
- Headaches
- Muscle and joint pain
- Tiredness and loss of energy
- A red, circular skin rash around a tick bite, which usually appears up to 30 days after being bitten by a tick. It can also look like a bullseye.



Some people with Lyme disease develop more severe symptoms months or years later. This is more likely if treatment is delayed. These more severe symptoms may include:

- Pain and swelling in joints
- Nerve problems – such as pain or numbness
- Heart problems
- Trouble with memory or concentration.

### How to remove a tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick-removal tool
2. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible
3. Slowly pull upwards, **taking care not to squeeze or crush the tick.** Dispose of it when you've removed it
4. Clean the bite with antiseptic or soap and water.

### How to avoid tick bites



There are no vaccines to defend against the tick-borne disease. Therefore, the best defence is to avoid being bitten.

To reduce the risk of being bitten:

- Walk on clearly defined paths to avoid brushing against vegetation where ticks may be present
- Wear light coloured clothing so that ticks crawling on clothing can be spotted and brushed off
- Use an insect repellent that can repel ticks and prevent them from climbing onto clothing or attaching to skin (always follow the manufacturer's guidance)
- Wear long trousers and long-sleeved tops to reduce the direct exposure of ticks to your skin.

### More information

- Visit the [Lyme Disease Action](#) website.
- Public Health England – [Be Tick Aware toolkit](#)
- BBC News Article: "[I had to have heart surgery after a tick bite](#)"
- [The Big Tick project](#) – raising awareness about the dangers of ticks and tick-borne disease in the UK.