

Ticks and Lyme Disease

Issued to: **All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

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Contact: [Health and Wellness Team](#)



Overview

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that can be spread to humans by infected ticks. It is a relatively uncommon infection as not all ticks carry Lyme disease. It is estimated in England and Wales 4% of tick bites can lead to Lyme disease. However, it is more likely between April-July when ticks are most active in grassy or woody areas.

If an employee is bitten by a tick they should be aware of the symptoms of Lyme disease and take immediate action to seek medical care to treat the infection (e.g., GP or NHS 111). If detected early, treatment of Lyme disease responds well to general antibiotics.

Common symptoms include:

- A circular or oval shape rash around a tick bite
- flu-like symptoms a few days or weeks after they were bitten by an infected tick
- high temperature, feeling hot and shivery
- tiredness and loss of energy

To reduce the risk of ticks attaching to the skin of employees who work around grassy or woody areas, and therefore lowering the risk of Lyme disease, employees should:

- Cover up exposed areas of skin by wearing appropriate PPE provided (consider higher boots and spraying your trousers.)
- Where short sleeves are worn, use insect repellent and regularly check skin and clothing to brush off any ticks which are spotted
- Limit the time spent in grassy or wooded areas to the requirements of the work being carried out
- During breaks and at the end of the work, check skin and clothing
- If a tick is found on the skin remove as quickly as possible using fine tipped tweezers ensuring the tick is not squashed on removal

Discussion points

- Do you have the required and well-fitting PPE when working in grassy or woody areas?
- Do you always check clothes and skin after working in grassy or woody areas?
- Call 111 if you have been bitten by a tick and suspect you have symptoms of Lyme disease.
- If you were bitten by a tick whilst at work and Lyme disease is confirmed, inform your line manager as this is required to be reported as a RIDDOR
- Further information can be found on the [NHS website](#)