

Protect yourself against tick bites

People are being reminded to protect themselves against the risk of tick bites. Ticks can carry Lyme disease which may be transmitted to humans through their bite. There are no vaccines to defend against tick-borne disease in the UK and Ireland. Therefore, the best defence is to avoid being bitten.

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures, which feed on the blood of animals and sometimes people.

If you are involved in outdoor activities which take you into the countryside, parks, or gardens with wildlife such as squirrels and hedgehogs, you may be at risk of tick bites.

[Lyme disease](#) is a bacterial infection which is transmitted by tick bites.

The earliest and most common symptom of Lyme disease is a pink or red circular rash that develops around the area of the bite, three to 30 days after someone is bitten.

The rash is often described as looking like a bullseye on a dartboard.

You may also experience flu-like symptoms, such as:

- tiredness
- headaches
- muscle or joint pain

Consult [your GP](#) if a rash or other symptoms develop within a few weeks of a tick bite, as early treatment can prevent progression to chronic disease.

If Lyme disease is left untreated, further health issues may develop months or even years later, including:

- problems affecting the nervous system
- heart problems
- inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord

Preventing tick bites

Late spring, early summer and autumn are peak times for tick bites, which coincide with people venturing outdoors in the warmer weather.

It's important to take preventive measures against tick bites and also look out for ticks after visiting affected areas.

The best way of preventing Lyme disease is to avoid being bitten when you are

in grassy or woodland areas known to have a high tick population. The following precautions might help to prevent Lyme disease:

- keep to footpaths and avoid long grass when out walking
- wear a long-sleeved shirt
- tuck your trousers into your socks
- wear light-coloured clothes (to help you spot a tick on them)
- use insect repellent
- check yourself for ticks and remove any promptly
- check your children and pets for ticks

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent Lyme disease.

How to remove a tick

If you find a tick on your or your child's skin, remove it using a pair of tweezers that won't squash the tick (such as fine-tipped tweezers) or a tick removal tool (available from pet shops or vets).

Gently grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull steadily away from the skin without crushing the tick. If you use a tick removal tool, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Wash your skin with water and soap afterwards, then apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.

Don't use a lit cigarette end, a match head or substances such as alcohol or petroleum jelly to force the tick out.

More useful links

[Advice to students renting accommodation](#)

Students are reminded of the laws in place to protect them as they look for accommodation ahead of the new academic year. It is important for students to be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Private landlords

Most students will rent accommodation from private landlords and most private landlords comply with the law.

All private landlords are required to register on the [Landlord Registration Scheme](#).

Students can check at the following link if a landlord is on the register:

A landlord who does not register may face a fixed penalty of £500 or a court fine of up to £2,500.

Deposits

Landlords normally ask for a deposit. That deposit is now protected under a scheme which ensures that if you're entitled to get it back, you can be assured that this will happen.

Landlords must, within 28 days of receiving the deposit, notify the tenant of how the deposit has been protected.

If, after 28 days of handing over the deposit, the tenant hasn't received information about how it has been protected, they should report this immediately to the local council's environmental health department.

A landlord who does not protect a tenant's deposit may face a fixed penalty of three times the amount of the deposit or a court fine of up to £20,000.

You can find out more about the scheme at this link:

The pages below should also be useful:

Problems with your landlord

If you have any problems with your landlord, the following links have advice:

Sharing a house

You may be thinking of sharing a house with a few friends, or perhaps you're moving into accommodation with people you don't know. There are hints and tips on these pages:

Leaving a property

Before leaving a property which you have been renting there are a number of things you should do to make it go smoothly:

- contact service suppliers (like electricity, gas) to advise that you are leaving
- record any meter readings, if possible along with the landlord
- arrange for mail to be redirected
- clean the property
- contact the landlord to arrange for an inspection and return of your deposit
- secure the property when leaving
- return all sets of keys

More useful links

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[A-Level results – advice on your next steps](#)

The A and AS-Level results are out and guidance and advice is available to you on your next steps. Even if you didn't get the grades you were expecting, all is not lost. While it may appear that a door has been closed, other doors are now open.

What next?

The most important thing at this stage is to stay calm and take the time to consider the options available to you.

It's important that you choose the route best suited to your abilities, while taking into consideration future economic and labour market trends.

Contact a careers adviser

Professionally-qualified careers advisers can give you impartial information, advice and guidance on the options available to you.

To contact a careers adviser, you can:

Careers advisers will be available from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm to provide support to A-Level students on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 August.

Online help

To help you explore your options, there is lots of useful information available online about:

- accepting an offer from a university or college
- clearing
- re-sits and re-marks
- appeals
- gap years

You can find out more by going to the page below:

Further information on the many options available to you are also available

in the following section:

Querying your results

If you have a query on any issue relating to your exam results (for example appeals, re-marks or re-sits) then contact your school, college or the [Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) helpline:

The helpline will be open 9.00 am to 5.00 pm until Wednesday 29 August.

Contacting universities and colleges

You also can find contact details for universities and colleges in Northern Ireland below:

More useful links

[Advice for students and their parents at exam results time](#)

For thousands of students the waiting is nearly over. This year, AS/A Levels results will be published on Thursday 17 August and GCSE results on Thursday 24 August. Once you get your results you may have important decisions to make, and you can get guidance and advice from the Careers Service.

Contacting a careers adviser

Whether or not you get the grades you are expecting, it's important to make an informed choice once you have your results.

The [Careers Service](#) has a team of professionally-qualified careers advisers who offer impartial careers information, advice and guidance to people of all ages.

To contact a careers adviser you can:

Careers Service advisers will be available from 9.00 am to 7.30 pm to provide support to students and their parents on:

- Thursday 17 and Friday 18 August for A-Level students
- Thursday 24 and Friday 25 August for GCSE students

Online information

To help you explore your options, there is also lots of useful information available on nidirect, including articles on:

To find out more, please go to the following page:

More useful links

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Hepatitis B protection now part of routine baby vaccine

All babies born on or after 1 August 2017 are now being offered protection against hepatitis B as part of the universal childhood immunisation programme. This Hexavalent vaccine replaces the existing 5-in-1 vaccine that children routinely get.

Routine immunisation schedule

There has been no change to the immunisation schedule or to the number of injections – children will continue to be immunised at the ages of 8, 12 and 16 weeks.

The only change is to the components of the vaccine itself, which now provides extra protection for hepatitis B, as well as protecting against:

- diphtheria
- tetanus
- whooping cough (pertussis)
- polio
- haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)

It is already widely used with around 150 million doses having been given in 97 countries in Europe and across the world.

You can find out more about the vaccine at these links:

As adults are the majority of infected people, vaccinating children will help protect them in childhood from potential exposure to infected household or family members.

Vaccinating infants will essentially reduce the risk of infection and will provide longer term protection against future exposure risks.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is spread by contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person. It can cause liver cirrhosis and cancer.

[Hepatitis B](#) can be passed on:

- through having unprotected sex
- from mother to baby
- from contact with infected blood in areas of the world where hepatitis B is more common

You cannot get hepatitis B by shaking hands, coughing, sneezing, sharing food, or by using the same toilet.

People with hepatitis B infection may not be aware that they are infected as chronic infection mostly has no symptoms.

If you think you may have been exposed to the virus, even if this was many years ago, talk to [your GP](#) or nurse and get tested.

More useful links

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