University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

Tick bites and Lyme disease

If you have had a tick bite, the aim will be to remove the tick whole to avoid any potential risk of infection to you. Sometimes it is not possible to remove it completely and continuing to try if it doesn't come out easily can cause more damage.

Ticks have a risk of transferring bugs to humans. The most common in the UK is a condition called Lyme disease. You do not need to have treatment for every tick bite, but in some cases, you may need a course of antibiotics.

One of the most common signs of a problem after a tick bite is developing a specific rash. Look out for a red, circular rash that looks like a bullseye, which typically appears within 1 to 4 weeks (but can take up to 3 months). It may be faint or appear behind the knees, groin, or armpits. The rash can have a darker or lighter area in the center and might gradually spread. If you have this rash when we see you we are likely to start antibiotics. If you do not have this rash, we will ask you to look out for it and other signs of Lyme disease and seek review in ED or with your GP if you develop them.

Early signs Lyme disease include:

- a high temperature, or feeling hot and shivery
- headache
- muscle and joint pain
- tiredness and loss of energy
- facial palsy - weakness in the facial muscles (especially children)

Please see national guidelines for further advice

cks.nice.org.uk/topics/lyme-disease

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