

ENG

Tick bites

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What is a tick?

A tick is a tiny insect, about the size of a poppy/sesame seed.

Potential hosts (which include all wild birds and mammals, domestic animals, and humans) acquire ticks only by direct contact with them. Once a tick latches onto human skin it generally climbs upward until it reaches a protected or creased area, often the back of the knee, groin, navel, armpit, ears, or nape of the neck. It then begins the process of inserting its mouthparts into the skin until it reaches the blood supply.

Ticks can spread diseases to animals and humans through tick bites. Their bite does not hurt and there is no initial discomfort following a tick bite. However, it is important to remove it as soon as you see it.

Some ticks are infected by the *Borrelia* bacteria, and may infect humans with the disease 'Lyme Borreliosis'.

After you spend time outdoors (in the woods or an area overgrown with grass and bushes), check your skin and your children's skin carefully for ticks and rashes. Check your pets for ticks, too.

How to remove the tick

The tick has its head imbedded in the human skin, from where it sucks blood.

It is important that you remove the tick in total – preferably in one piece - and that no tick parts are left behind.

You can purchase a special 'tick-remover' at the local pharmacy, but a pair of fine-tipped tweezers can also be used.

- Grasp the head of the tick as close to your skin as possible without breaking the tick.
- Pull the tick in a slow and steady upward motion, until it lets go. Avoid sudden bursts.
- Be careful not to twist or squeeze the tick body, whereby you risk that some of the tick intestines are squeezed into your blood. Do not apply petroleum jelly, nail polish, alcohol or any other irritant to the tick in an attempt to get it to back out.
- It is important to remove the tick as quickly as possible. If you manage to remove it within the first 24 hours, the risk of a *Borrelia*-infection is regarded as minimal.

What to do if the head of the tick remains in your skin?

If any tick parts remain in the skin, you can leave them alone or carefully remove them the same way you would a splinter. This may not cause a *Borrelia*-infection, but you may risk a general infection of the wound.

See your doctor at signs of infection

- Redness, swelling, heat, seeping from the wound
- Increasing throbbing pain
- Fever
- Red stripes under your skin by the bite

Keep an eye on the bite for symptoms of Borreliosis

The symptoms of Borreliosis may show up within 3-30 days of the tick bite. The symptoms are typically:

- A gradually increasing area of redness around the tick bite. After some time the center of the redness may fade and create a ring appearance. Sometimes the redness may develop into a rash.
- Fatigue
- Headache
- A light fever
- Muscle aches and joint pains
- Swollen lymph glands

If you encounter any of these symptoms following a tick bite, you should contact a physician.

Tetanus vaccine

A tetanus vaccine every ten years is recommended to maintain immunity. Please check on (link) www.sundhed.dk if you are still covered by your latest tetanus dose.

If you receive a new dose, it is normal to feel a shoulder muscle soreness for 2-4 days after the vaccine.

Questions

You are quite welcome to contact Skadetelefonen on tel. 1818 or your doctor, if you are in doubt of any aspect of the treatment.