

LYME DISEASE

Animal Ticks are common in and around the New Forest area (particularly during the summer months). The following information tells you about the Ticks and what to do.

The disease and the Tick

- Lyme disease is an infection caused by a spirochaete bacterium.
- The spirochaete is transmitted to people by the bite of a tiny Tick *Ixodes Ricinus*.
- *Ixodes Ricinus* is found on vegetation and animals in grassland, marshland and woodland habitats.
- The Tick is most active and feeding from April to October.

Prevention

- Avoid tick habitats when possible.
- Wear long trousers.
- Light coloured clothing will help you spot any ticks.
- Repellents on your clothing and repellent collars for your pets may be useful.
- Brush off clothing before entering the house.
- Undress and check for Ticks, they usually crawl about for several hours before burying their feeding tube into your skin.
- Remove any attached Ticks by gently tugging repeatedly with tweezers at the place where the feeding tube enters the skin (save the Tick for future reference).

Diagnosis and treatment

- Check for any rash or red patch, especially one that expands over several days. The red patch can be quite large (1" - 18") which may be ring shaped.
- Flu like symptoms (low grade fever, chills, headache) often occur early in the disease.
- Meningitis like symptoms, such as stiff neck, difficulty in concentrating, remembering and fatigue, can occur later in the disease.
- If you have any of the above symptoms following a tick bite or just the symptoms inform your doctor.
- Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics at any stage. The earlier it is diagnosed the easier it is to treat.