Lyme disease prevention...

You will not feel a tick bite you. Feeding ticks stay attached for hours or days. They can spread diseases after 16 hours or possibly less.

Ticks can be as small as a poppy seed. You could easily mistake a feeding tick for a speck of dirt.

Tick bites are the main source of Lyme disease infection. In the UK they can also spread Anaplasma and Q-fever, and abroad they can spread other serious diseases.

Ticks are active all summer but they may be active in very early spring or late autumn.

Tick habitats include forests, the countryside and city parks and gardens.

Ticks climb up plants and long grass, around knee height, waiting for a passing warm-blooded creature to catch onto. They may be in mown grass.

Ticks cannot fly.

All regions of the UK have ticks.

Ticks’ natural hosts are small mammals which live on the ground, such as mice and squirrels.

Buy a tick removal tool online or from a pet shop. They may be fine pointed tweezers, or a notched tool to lever the tick out.

Know how to remove ticks safely. The tool must fit under the tick without squeezing its body. Pull the tick straight out vertically: this may take some force.

Take a tick remover with you on days out.

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Visit caudwellyme.com/info for more information on Lyme disease
Use insect repellent, preferably containing citriodiol or icaridin, on exposed skin. Remember children have hands at grass height, so treat their hands and arms as well as legs. Wear long trousers, and long sleeves if possible. Don’t wear open sandals or shorts in risky environments. Wear light coloured clothing so you can see ticks easily. Consider treating clothes with permethrin, especially if you go camping. Put down a picnic cloth in parks, the countryside or even your own garden. Avoid long grass and plants. Tuck trousers into socks if you do need to walk through vegetation which will brush against you.

Examine your body looking for ticks. Ticks can be as small as a poppy seed or, when fully fed, as large as a pea. Check your children after they play outside. You should check pets every day. Have a “tick buddy” and regularly check each other for ticks in places that you cannot see. Check the hairline and behind the ears and neck. Look at your navel, the backs of your knees and your armpits. Check your groin and abdomen regularly, as ticks will crawl long distances inside your clothing to reach this warm area. Males, check your genitals! Ticks often attach here and may go unnoticed for a long time.

Shower when you arrive home after a day out of doors. Put clothes in a tumble-dryer for 10 minutes to kill ticks in seams and hems.

Take pointed tweezers suitable for removing all kinds of ticks (see below). Take insect repellent to use day and night. Take disinfectant to clean skin after tick removal. Spray the entire groundsheet and tent with permethrin. Wear light coloured clothes and pyjamas, which will make it easier to see ticks. Take a camping seat or at least a blanket to sit on, instead of sitting on grass. Wash everything when you get home, or at least give it a blast in the tumble dryer for ten minutes: You do NOT want to bring ticks home as your holiday souvenir.

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