

TICKS

Lyme disease

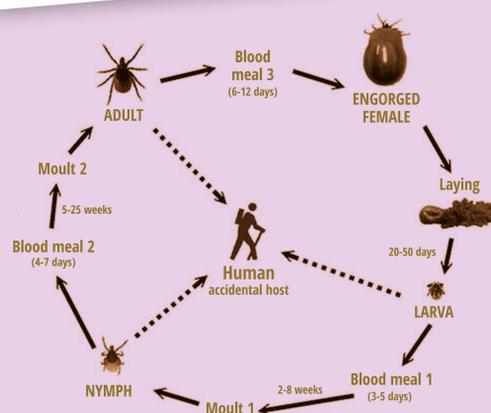


Name *Ixodes ricinus*
 Length 0,5 à 4 mm
 Longevity as a biting vector 2 à 7 years
 Special feature females double in length after a blood meal

Biology of the vector

Ticks are **not insects but arachnids** that feed on blood at each stage of their development (larva, nymph, adult).

Ticks **hunt**, attaching themselves to **vertebrates** and each 'meal' can last for several days.



Geographic distribution

Distribution of Lyme disease



More than **900 tick species** are known, covering the whole world from the tropics to temperate climates and as far as the poles. Habitats are varied in **prairie and forests** (including medium altitude mountain areas). However, the species observed are different according to the region.

Vector transmission

Ticks transmit a very great variety of infectious agents to humans and animals. In the northern hemisphere, Lyme disease (also known as Lyme borreliosis) is the main human vector disease (12,000 to 15,000 new cases in France every year). The bacterium involved is *Borrelia burgdorferi*, transmitted by ticks of the genus *Ixodes*.

The effects in humans range from **skin lesions and joint pains** to neurological or heart conditions that may occur 10 years after the bite. In the South, other tick species transmit viruses and bacteria that cause particularly serious damage to livestock.



Prevention and control

Treatment of Lyme disease using antibiotics is long and difficult. The best way of avoiding infection is to protect oneself from tick bites. For this, when in forest areas:

- Wear appropriate clothes and footwear
- Use repellents
- On returning check whether there are any ticks on your body and if so remove them with a tick removal device



Lyme disease is increasing strongly in Europe and the United States