

Top Ten Tick Facts

1 Ticks are arthropods from the arachnida class (eight legged - spiders, scorpions, mites) and are of the subclass Acarina. They come under the superorder of Parasitiformes.



2 Ticks may be classified as nest-dwelling (nidicolous) parasites or as field-dwelling (non-nidicolous) and may be found throughout the UK in both rural and urbanised locations.



3 Ticks take a blood meal from warm-blooded mammals (including humans) and birds, but some species will feed on reptiles and amphibians.



4 Tick saliva contains biochemicals which prevent inflammation and blood coagulation, and anaesthetise the bite site to help prevent the host from feeling the bite.

5 Ticks enter a state of torpor when conditions are unsuitable. They can withstand extreme cold this way. They can also survive for approximately one year without feeding.



6 Ticks don't jump or fly. They crawl onto their host while it is in its nest or sleeping place, or they climb on, or drop onto, the host from low vegetation as it brushes past.

7 Ticks prefer secure, warm, moist places on the body to feed. This includes the back of the knee, armpits, navel, between buttocks and in the groin area. They can be the size of a poppy seed and very inconspicuous.

8 There are over 20 species of tick in the UK and over 800 worldwide. The most common to infect people in the UK is *Ixodes ricinus* (the sheep tick, wood tick or castor bean tick) and they are most active from March to October.

9 To reproduce, the adult female sheep tick takes a single blood meal to increase her weight 100 times or more. Almost all the blood is converted into eggs for a single massive oviposition (egg laying) of approximately 3,000 eggs.

10 Ticks can carry and transmit more than one disease simultaneously.