

TICKED OFF

ALASTAIR'S STORY

Role: Area Operations Manager for the Grampian
Base: Huntly
Diagnosis: Suspected Lyme Disease



Outdoor Experience:

"As the Area Operation Manager, I'm responsible for overseeing all of the harvesting, the restocking, the civil engineering works and the wildlife management – including the culling of deer and that kind of thing. I'm out one or two times a week in the forest. I look at mature forest, often walking through dense undergrowth, heather or grass."

My Experience:

"Over the summer of 2014, I'd been out quite a bit. I had several tick bites over that period including one or two that had a kind of raised appearance and were quite itchy. Following on from that, I started feeling tired. My wife noticed it more than I did. I was having a little kip at night when I got back from work, which was unusual."

"That then became more of a kind of fatigue than just tiredness. I was very tired after short distances, walking upstairs, that kind of thing. As that gradually became worse, I experienced pains in the joints in my ankles, in my knees and my hips, and very painful soles to my feet."

"Following about a six-week period of having this, I went to my doctor. Once I made that decision I felt a lot better actually, but there was definitely worry and concern. Being a forestry worker, very quickly he decided that he would put me on a course of antibiotics for Lyme Disease, and that lasted six weeks. I got quite a bit of reassurance from my doctor in terms of, "We can treat it quickly with antibiotics."

"Initially, for the first two or three weeks, there were no obvious signs of improvement, but thereafter it did start to improve, and many of the symptoms eased, particularly the fatigue, and then joints started to ache less. It was a period of eight to ten months before I got back to anything like normal. I would consider myself to be ninety to ninety-five percent back to where I was beforehand."

"Initially there was this kind of, "Well I'm not going to get Lyme Disease. I've had plenty of ticks before. I've not had a problem." I kind of didn't think too much about it. The early symptoms I didn't worry too much about. "I'm in my fifties, I'm getting a bit older, getting a bit tired." I was relatively fortunate in that it was treated very quickly, you know, four to six weeks after the likely incident. It was much more significant than any individual thing I had had before. I have known people with Lyme Disease before, and I know some of them suffered very badly over many years."

Alastair's Top Tips

- **Recognise where you are going will have ticks and prepare.**
- **Tuck trousers into socks, or wear gaiters. Fasten straps around the wrist.**
- **Check for ticks on leaving the area – both clothing and the body.**
- **The waist and back of the knees are hot spots for ticks.**

AVOID • CHECK • REMOVE • REPORT



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

