

# TICKED OFF

## SALLY'S STORY

**Role:** Education Policy Advisor  
**Base:** Edinburgh  
**Experience:** Lyme Disease Prevention



### Outdoor Experience:

"I'd like to go out more often, actually, but my job is very much linking in with other people, delivering learning about forests and the world around us, and taking the learning outdoors. I engage with other government departments, and third sector organisations, and I spend about twenty-five to fifty percent of my time out of the office."

### My Experience:

"I'd been canoeing down the Great Glen with work colleagues, and we'd stopped off for the night to camp in a wooded area with a lot of grass. I didn't find the ticks until I'd got home the following morning. They were incredibly small. In the end we found about thirty, forty, fifty on my body."

"I rang up my doctor and said, "Look, I've been in a tick area in the Highlands and I've thirty to fifty ticks on me. I really think I'm a prime candidate for the prophylactic antibiotics." I live in the central belt and my GP is a fairly urban GP, and his response was; "Well the NICE guidance says that you need to have the red ring and you need to have flu-like symptoms."

And I said, "Look, I know, and appreciate, what the NICE guidance says, but it's irrelevant in this case as far as I'm concerned because I've got so many on me, from a known hotspot area, and so the risk of one of those having Lyme in them is almost definite."

"I said, "I'll tell you what, my colleague who I was with, I know she's got ticks, and she's going to her GP and she lives in Highland Perthshire. If she gets prescribed the drugs, I'll give you a ring back."

"And she did get the drugs. So armed with that information I rang back my GP, spoke with a different one - who was still very reluctant initially - and we talked about probability, the fact it was in a hotspot area. And he was very good and signed the script off and I got it. It was a real lesson in being assertive - knowing I had the facts, knowing what the NICE guidance was saying, and the fact that GPs are being advised not to prescribe antibiotics willy-nilly."

"I got the drugs, took them as instructed and since then I have not had any symptoms."

### Sally's Top Tips

- Keep yourself covered up – wear weather appropriate clothing – to avoid ticks.
- Be aware of the range of tick sizes when checking – some are really tiny.
- Have a variety of removal devices – tick twisters and cards.
- When talking to GPs – know your facts and be assertive.

**AVOID • CHECK • REMOVE • REPORT**



**Forestry Commission Scotland**  
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

