



Guidance:

ECDC Communication Toolkit on Tick-borne diseases



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1. General overview

Welcome to the ECDC Communications Toolkit on Tick-borne Diseases. The aim of the toolkit is to assist European health authorities in raising awareness and limiting the spread of the main tick-borne diseases present in Europe: Lyme borreliosis, Tick-borne encephalitis, Tick-borne relapsing fever and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.

1.1 Overall strategy and objective of the toolkit

The overall objective of the ECDC Communication Toolkit on Tick-borne Diseases 2015 is to assist EU and EEA/EFTA countries in raising awareness about the health risks related to ticks amongst the selected target audiences and to encourage the adoption of preventive measures to help reduce the risk of developing tick-borne diseases.

The strategy chosen to meet this objective is to provide practical advice and template materials that communicators in member states' health authorities can use in line with the specific aims and needs of their health communication activities. All template materials have been drafted in a format designed to ease duplication and dissemination and take into account adaptability and respect for cost considerations.

1.2 The toolkit in the context of a communication strategy

Whether communicators choose to adapt and use some or all of the draft materials included in this toolkit, the materials will be most effective if they are part of a strategically targeted and timed campaign to raise awareness of ticks and tick-borne diseases. For example, in countries where tick-borne diseases are endemic, the leaflets aimed at the general public will be more effective if they are distributed during spring and until autumn which is the period when ticks are active.

When devising a communication strategy key considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Timing (such as seasonal factors, existing awareness campaigns and news stories)
- Price (both budget and costs)
- Products (types of materials used in the communications which can also include physical products - such as insect repellents - or services - health checks)
- Distribution (how and where to circulate the messages/materials)
- Additional channels (incorporating advertising, public relations, promotions and media advocacy)
- Potential allies/partnerships (such as schools, hospitals and health clinics, pharmacies, medical associations, travel companies, airlines, airport authorities, camping sites, outdoors sports centres, etc.)

1.3 The contents of the toolkit

This toolkit contains draft materials aimed at providing key audiences with information on tick-borne diseases, how they are spread, what to do in case of a tick bite and which symptoms to be aware of.



The toolkit guidelines include also suggested tactics for getting the messages across to different audiences.

A photo- library with photos of different species of ticks is available free for download and use on the tick-borne diseases communication toolkit webpage. For the use of the photos, please consult the chapter ‘Copyright’.

Moreover, a logo has been created for the ECDC Communication Toolkit on Tick-borne Diseases which can also be used for national initiatives if desired.

The following prototype materials contained in this toolkit can be used in member states where one or more tick-borne diseases are **endemic**:

Healthcare professionals

- Factsheet on Lyme borreliosis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne encephalitis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Factsheet on Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Powerpoint presentation on tick-borne diseases

Visiting travellers

- Poster
- Leaflet on ticks, tick-borne diseases and preventive measures

General public

- Leaflet on ticks and preventive measures
- Information sheet on tick-borne diseases

Children

- Leaflet on ticks and preventive measures
- Poster
- Suggestion for poster competition



The following prototype materials contained in this toolkit can be used in member states where one or more tick-borne diseases are **not endemic**:

Healthcare professionals

- Factsheet on Lyme borreliosis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne encephalitis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Factsheet on Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Powerpoint presentation on tick-borne diseases

(All same as above)

Travellers going to endemic areas

- Leaflet on ticks, tick-borne diseases and preventive measures

(All same as above)

1.4 How to use the toolkit

This toolkit builds on examples of communications activities currently underway in some EU member states and other countries such as Turkey and the United States, as well as existing materials produced by ECDC. The toolkit has been developed with a view to either complement existing national initiatives or to provide the basis for the launch of new activities. As such, it contains basic communications materials to be adapted to national needs where necessary. For detailed information on how to use the templates and adapt them to local use, see Section 3 on developing and adapting materials in member states.

The materials provide various vehicles for communicating on tick-borne diseases. The multiple tools are designed to ensure that the targeted audiences have access to the degree of information they may require and are based on the recognition that only by repeated delivery are the messages registered.

Throughout the elements of the toolkit, consistent and clear central messages are transmitted. Note, however, that information contained in the template materials may need to be updated in the future as new evidence becomes available.



2. Targeted information materials

An important element of any health communication strategy is to identify and know the target audiences, in order to adapt the information and its presentation to their needs, their level of knowledge on the specific topic, as well as their attitudes and perceptions. The materials included in this toolkit are designed to direct key messages on tick-borne diseases and their prevention at four specific, pre-identified audiences for whom information on tick-borne diseases and preventive measures can be relevant: healthcare practitioners across Europe, travellers visiting in endemic areas, the general public living in endemic areas, and children in endemic areas.

In recognition of the varying level of prior knowledge and opportunities for responding to the threat of tick-borne diseases among these groups, the materials have been adapted accordingly, while preserving consistency in the messaging.

The advantage of creating an overarching approach for a particular target group is that it creates a basis for consistency. This allows for the possibility of further tweaking the information to reach individual subgroups within a target population.

Specific materials have already been pre-tested in focus group studies¹ with small groups of people representing members of the general public. The materials pre-tested were those addressing travellers and general public. These focus group studies took place in December 2009 in five countries: France, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom. The reactions of focus group participants to the draft toolkit materials provided useful insight on how these materials were perceived. Based on the focus-groups' input, content and presentation of the materials were revised in order to better ensure that these resonate with their intended target audiences.

One interesting result from these focus group studies is that several participants, when asked about their previous knowledge on what to do if they found a tick attached to their body, recommended risky ways of removing ticks (e.g. burning it, applying substances, etc.). This confirms how important it is that information materials address the correct way of tick-removal.

Another issue that focus group participants highlighted was the importance of receiving more locally adapted information as regards which disease(s) is prevalent in the area where people live and which are the risk areas (e.g. a map showing in which parts of a country/region a disease is most prevalent, statistics on the development of the disease(s), or graphs). This information need can be addressed by the member states when adapting toolkit materials for their specific contexts.

This section gives some key considerations for each target group and it provides an outline of the template materials developed for each target group.

¹ Focus group research is based on facilitating an organised discussion with a group of individuals representing a specific population group, in order to explore views and experiences on a specific topic.



2.1 Materials targeting healthcare practitioners

The aim of communications targeted at healthcare practitioners, in both endemic as well as non-endemic areas, is to ensure correct and timely diagnosis of tick-borne diseases by increasing health practitioners' awareness of the symptoms and options for diagnosis and treatment. Health practitioners are also encouraged to provide advice on preventive measures where necessary.

Materials developed include:

- Factsheet on Lyme borreliosis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne encephalitis
- Factsheet on Tick-borne relapsing fever
- Factsheet on Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Presentation on tick-borne diseases

These materials are intended to deliver clear and simple messages to ensure a clear understanding by the health practitioner with regard to diagnosis and treatment, as well as to allow for the advice to be transferred in a coherent manner to the patient.

2.1.1 Factsheets for healthcare professionals

The factsheets included in this toolkit provide concise key information on each of the four targeted tick-borne diseases for medical purposes. They are appropriate for use in both endemic as well as non-endemic member states, as healthcare professionals in non-endemic countries may meet patients who have been infected while travelling abroad (imported cases). The factsheets contain vital information related to diagnosis and treatment of patients who present with symptoms.

The same messages are presented in the PowerPoint slide presentation for healthcare professionals and can be used together with this or separately.

In terms of the dissemination of the factsheet, it is advisable to explore channels and venues that offer a natural link to the healthcare professional community such as:

- Direct mailing to hospitals/practicing doctors
- Healthcare symposiums/events

2.1.2 Presentation on tick-borne diseases

The Power Point presentation included in this toolkit provides the same information as is presented in the factsheets. The aim of the presentation is to provide a visual briefing to healthcare professionals, e.g. during medical meetings or conferences. It is recommended that the presenter is fully briefed on all the key issues beforehand and that the slide decks are presented to small- medium sized group of healthcare professionals to ensure an interactive environment and enable an informative discussion between the participants.

The presentation for health practitioners outlines the diagnosis and treatment of patients who present with symptoms of tick-borne diseases. Like the factsheets, this presentation is aimed at both endemic as well as non-endemic member states. The presentation can be used together with the factsheet or separately.



2.2 Materials targeting travellers

The aim of communications targeted at travellers is to raise awareness of the risk of contracting a tick-borne disease when travelling to endemic areas and to encourage travellers to take the appropriate measures.

Materials for travellers include:

- Leaflet for travellers
- Poster for travellers

In terms of the dissemination of materials, it is advisable to explore channels and venues that offer a natural link to the travelling community such as:

- Travel clinics
- Travel information booths/websites
- Travel agencies
- Pharmacies in endemic areas
- Hotels, camping sites and other tourist facilities in endemic areas
- Airports in endemic areas
- Train/bus stations in endemic areas
- Outdoors sports facilities in endemic areas
- Websites that offer information for travellers

2.2.1 Leaflet for travellers

The four-page A5-size leaflet for travellers provides information about ticks, the risk, prevention of tick bites, how to react in the case of a tick bite and sets out the symptoms for each of the potential tick-borne diseases. The leaflet is designed for distribution to travellers before they travel to endemic areas in Europe. The leaflet can be distributed in general practitioners' offices, travel clinics, travel agencies, and pharmacies in endemic as well as non-endemic areas.

Please note that the leaflet includes a blank space on page 1, bottom left, for local authorities to input relevant information such as risk areas or statistics.

2.2.2 Poster for travellers

The prototype sheet (format: 400x600mm) which can be used as a poster is intended for display in endemic areas, e.g. in airports, hotels, camping sites, forest stations and outdoors sports facilities. The poster provides top-line key messages on tick prevention and appropriate responses to tick bite in a way so that it can be read and understood quickly, as people pass by.



2.3 Materials targeting the general public in endemic areas

The aim of communications targeted at the general public in endemic areas is to create a significant level of awareness and understanding of the risks associated with ticks.

The materials for these target audiences include:

- Leaflet on tick awareness
- Information sheet on tick-borne diseases

These materials are intended to deliver clear and simple messages in a visually interesting way to capture the audience's attention. They have been created with a view to communicate with as broad an audience as possible.

The information contained in these two materials is in general very similar. Presenting two options of templates allows for countries to choose which material can be best suited for their needs: a shorter version with more concise information and a longer version where, for example, details on correct tick-removal procedures are included.

2.3.1 Leaflet for the general public in endemic areas

The four-page A5-size leaflet provides information about ticks, the risk, the prevention of tick bites and how to react in the case of a tick bite, and sets out the symptoms for each of the potential tick-borne diseases. Four options of the leaflet have been provided. Most of the content is similar, but each leaflet option has more information on one of the diseases.

In terms of the dissemination of the leaflet, it is advisable to explore channels and venues that offer a natural link to the local community or where citizens may seek health advice and/or where people pursue outdoors activities such as:

- Doctor's waiting rooms
- Pharmacies
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Health websites
- Outdoors facilities

2.3.2 Information sheet on tick-borne diseases for the general public in endemic areas

The two-page A4 information sheet is mainly intended for members of the general public who have been bitten by (a) tick(s) so as to inform them primarily about the symptoms that they have to be aware of. Four options of the template information sheet are presented. Most of the content is similar, but each information sheet option has more information on one of the diseases.

The information sheet can be distributed to the public, in general practitioners' offices and pharmacies. If deemed appropriate, it could also be sent by local health authorities to households together with a letter, explaining the situation of tick-borne diseases in that particular area.



2.4 Materials targeting children in endemic areas

The aim of communications targeted at children is to, in a simple and easily understandable manner, create awareness about what ticks are, how to avoid them and what to do in the case the children get bitten by a tick.

The materials include:

- A colourful and easily understandable leaflet on tick awareness
- Poster on how to avoid ticks (be tick free)
- Ideas for a poster competition

The messages are presented in a visually interesting way to capture the children's attention. They have been created with a view to communicate with children of 7-12 years of age.

In terms of the dissemination of materials, it is advisable to explore channels and venues that offer a natural link to the children or where their parent's may seek health advice such as:

- Schools
- Sport's centres
- Children's Libraries
- Cultural centres
- Doctor's waiting rooms
- Community centres
- Pharmacies
- Educational websites
- Outdoors facilities

As children are generally likely to seek further advice, it would be important to provide accompanying materials to teachers and other people employed in the above-mentioned locations, and if possible to parents, in order to ensure that they are able to discuss with children about ticks. The leaflet for the general public in endemic areas (please see 2.3.1) and the information sheet on tick-borne diseases (please see 2.3.2) could be useful for this purpose.

2.4.1 Leaflet for children living in endemic areas

The four-page A5-size leaflet for children provides information about why it is important to avoid ticks, prevention of tick bites, the need for checking for bites and appropriate responses. The leaflet is intended for distribution in schools to children who are old enough to read the brochure themselves. It can be used in combination with the poster and the drawing competition (both described below).

2.4.2 Poster for children living in endemic areas

The poster for children (format: 300x500mm) repeats the messages from the leaflet mentioned under section 2.7 in an even simpler format. The information explains six simple steps to being "tick-free". It is possible to make the poster even simpler by deleting the text written in grey font underneath each numbered drawing. In this case, it would be important to also make the leaflet for children available



where the poster is displayed in order to ensure that the meaning behind each action suggested in the poster is well understood.

The poster is intended for display in endemic areas in schools, children's outdoor sports centres, children's libraries, etc. The poster can be used in combination with the leaflet for children and the drawing competition.

2.4.3 Competition for children living in endemic areas

Creativity is one of the best and most effective ways to engage with children and to make sure that they learn in a quick and effective manner. The ideas for a poster competition for school children living in endemic areas will enable teachers to educate the children about ticks and the health risks related to tick in an interactive and fun manner.

The competition would demand that the teachers involved spend some time talking about ticks with the children before the actual competition takes place. For this purpose the teachers could, for example, use the poster "Be tick free" and the leaflet aimed at children as well as other materials in the toolkit.

If a decision on running such School Level Poster Competition is taken, and in order to create awareness about this initiative, the Authority in charge would need to advertise the competition in relevant print media or to announce it in a letter sent by the relevant authority to the schools and include some basic information about the competition such as:

1. The starting date and the end date of the competition
2. Where the schools can get/download all the relevant information about the competition (competition rules etc.)
3. The basic rules of the competition
4. The judge(s) of the competition (e.g. a prominent artist, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education)
5. That the winning poster will be printed and distributed to schools, hospitals etc. and can be posted on the website of the organising Authority (and other relevant websites as appropriate).

The Authority in charge would also need to:

1. Set up a jury/committee comprising of 4 to 5 renowned persons in Art, Art teachers and/or officials from the Authority who will select up to e.g. 10 best posters out of the total number of posters.
2. Upload the 10 best posters to the authority's website and people can vote for their favourite poster. The poster that receives the most votes by a set date will be printed and distributed to schools, hospitals etc and can be posted the website of the Authority (and other relevant websites as appropriate).

To help the Authority in charge to organise the School Level Poster Competition the following draft documents are included in the toolkit:

- A draft letter to the schools
- A draft advert to print media
- The rules of the competition



3. Adapting the materials for local use

To ensure maximum outreach and resonance with the target audiences, each Member State may choose to adapt the template materials to each particular audience. We recommend for this task to include:

- translation of materials into the official language(s) if necessary
- including in the materials the name of the country, the locally endemic tick-borne disease and the endemic regions as appropriate, in the corresponding spaces left for this purpose in some of the template materials (marked in red)
- in order to offer to the public locally adapted information, some template materials provide for spaces where countries can insert graphics, statistics or a map, to inform in a visually appealing way on which disease(s) is(are) prevalent and where the risk areas are
- adapting the materials aimed at the general public and the poster for travellers so they cover only the diseases that are endemic in the specific country. In the template format, these materials includes information on all four tick-borne diseases but usually, only one disease will be endemic in a given country so only the text option referring to that particular disease should be used. This will also ensure a correct length of the materials
- including extra information deemed relevant for national or local populations. For example, please note that the leaflet includes a blank space on page 1, bottom left, for local authorities to input relevant information such as risk areas or statistics
- including on all materials points of contact for the general public and healthcare practitioners in case of further questions
- adapting the text of the materials in view of the local level of awareness of tick-borne diseases and behaviour and attitudes of the national audiences
- pre-testing of adapted materials with national target audiences prior to wider dissemination to ensure the messages/visuals speak to the national target audience

3.1 Template information

The templates provided in the toolkit can be used in their original form if desired, but all the template files can be easily translated and adapted for multiple uses according to the individual purposes of each national health communication activity.

The toolkit contains also all the graphics and the text-content as separate files, so that parts of these files can be inserted into materials being developed nationally. Completely new materials can also be produced on the basis of the logo, individual graphics, colours and fonts, etc. made available in this toolkit. The logo, individual graphics, colours and fonts are provided separately for easy application.

Each graphic file is provided in PDF flattened format for easy reproduction, as well as in Adobe Indesign for professional use.

The font used for the production of template materials for healthcare professionals, travellers and the general public is MetaPro. This font is adaptable to various alphabets and specific characters. A folder in the toolkit contains this font and its variations.



The font colours used in the template materials for healthcare professionals, travellers and the general public are as follows:

- CMYK-Green / 65-0-100-0 and its different saturation stages
- CMYK-Grey / 0-0-0-80

The fonts used for the production of template materials for children are Franklin Gothic and Impact. These fonts can also be adapted to various alphabets and specific characters. A folder in the toolkit contains these fonts and their variations as well.

The font colours used in the template materials for children are:

- CMYK-Green / 65-0-100-0 and its different saturation stages
- CMYK-Light blue/ 100-0-0-0

The graphics used in the materials in this toolkit are all in a resolution of 300 dpi, CMYK.

3.2 Copyrights

These communication guidelines were developed under the supervision, technical guidance and expertise of ECDC's Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit and ECDC's Programme on Emerging and Vector-borne Diseases. For this purpose the consultancy Burson-Marsteller, Brussels was contracted in accordance with EU agency rules on legal procurement to undertake the necessary operational work.

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If a private entity is involved in any way in organizing, sponsoring or supporting by any other means the campaign, please be aware that the use of the material is allowed as long as the purpose of the event is non-commercial.

The pictures contained in this toolkit are under the Creative Common copyright. You may copy, distribute or display the pictures – but not any derivative works based on them - only for non-commercial purposes. The original source of the photos should be cited as it has been done in the provided materials. The names of the sources are also included in the title of the photo files so as to avoid mistakes in the references, e.g. "Camping tent - ©S. Cashman".

The fonts provided are copyrighted and can only be used to update the provided materials. They cannot be used to create other materials than the provided ones unless regularly purchased.



4. About ECDC

Established in 2005 and based in Stockholm, Sweden, ECDC is a European Agency whose mandate is to strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases through identifying, assessing and communicating current and emerging threats to human health posed by infectious diseases and by promoting the exchange of best practice in disease prevention. Where threats are identified, ECDC supports the national and EU level public health authorities responding to them. In order to achieve this mission, ECDC works in partnership with national health protection bodies across Europe to strengthen and develop continent-wide disease surveillance and early warning systems. By working with experts throughout Europe, ECDC brings together Europe's health knowledge so as to develop authoritative scientific opinions about the risks posed by current and emerging infectious diseases.

This toolkit has been developed by ECDC to support the EU-wide response to the threat posed by tick-borne diseases.

In the area of health communication, the ECDC activities have three directions:

- Efficiently communicate the scientific and technical output of the ECDC to professional audiences.
- Communicating key public health messages and information to the media and to the European public.
- Support the development of member states communication capacities.

The communication toolkits are one of the working areas of ECDC's Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit, with the aim of supporting country health communication activities.

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This Communication Guide was developed under the supervision, technical guidance and expertise of ECDC's Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit and the Programme on Emerging and Vector-Borne Diseases. For this purpose the consultancy Burson- Marsteller Brussels was contracted under the legal procurement rules to undertake the necessary operational work.