



Lyme Disease

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection caused by the bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is spread to humans by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick.

How is Lyme Disease transmitted?

The Lyme disease bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, is spread through the bite of infected ticks. The blacklegged tick (or deer tick, *Ixodes scapularis*) spreads the disease in the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and north-central United States. The western blacklegged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) spreads the disease on the Pacific Coast.

Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but are often found in hard-to-see areas such as the groin, armpits, and scalp. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 36 to 48 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted.



Most humans are infected through the bites of immature ticks called nymphs. Nymphs are tiny (less than 2 mm) and difficult to see; they feed during the spring and summer months. Adult ticks can also transmit Lyme disease bacteria, but they are much larger and are more likely to be discovered and removed before they have had time to transmit the bacteria. Adult *Ixodes* ticks are most active during the cooler months of the year.

What are the symptoms of Lyme Disease?

Early signs and symptoms (3 to 30 days after tick bite):

- A characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans
- Fatigue
- Chills and fever
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes

Later signs and symptoms (days to months after tick bite):

- Severe headaches and neck stiffness
- Additional EM rashes on other areas of the body
- Facial palsy (loss of muscle tone or droop on one or both sides of the face)
- Arthritis with severe joint pain and swelling, particularly the knees and other large joints.
- Intermittent pain in tendons, muscles, joints, and bones
- Heart palpitations or an irregular heartbeat (Lyme carditis)
- Episodes of dizziness or shortness of breath
- Inflammation of the brain and spinal cord
- Nerve pain
- Shooting pains, numbness, or tingling in the hands or feet

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Can you get Lyme Disease more than once?

Yes, it is possible to get Lyme Disease more than once. A past infection of Lyme Disease will not create immunity from future infections.

How is Lyme Disease treated?

People treated with antibiotics for early Lyme disease usually recover rapidly and completely. The antibiotics most commonly used to treat Lyme disease include doxycycline, amoxicillin, or cefuroxime axetil. Some patients may have persistent or recurrent symptoms and may require another course of antibiotics.

How can I help prevent myself from getting Lyme Disease?

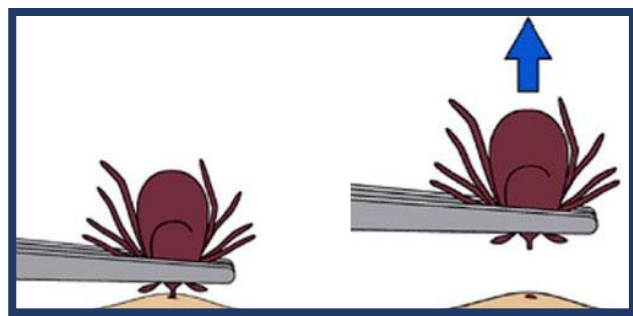
When in tick-infested habitats such as wooded or grassy areas:

- Wear light colored clothing to make a tick easier to spot
- Tuck pants into socks and tuck shirts into pants
- Consider using an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone, visit <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you> to find the best product to suit your needs
- Check clothing and skin every two hours for ticks
- Thoroughly check your body for attached ticks at the end of the day
- Avoid contact with ticks

You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by keeping grass short, removing leaf litter, and creating a 3ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel barrier where your lawn meets the woods.

How should a tick be removed from skin?

1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.
4. Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of a live tick by
 - Putting it in alcohol,
 - Placing it in a sealed bag/container,
 - Wrapping it tightly in tape, or
 - Flushing it down the toilet.



For more information:

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html> or call Huron County Public Health at 419-668-1652 ext. 269.