

LYME DISEASE FACT SHEET

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria

You can't catch Lyme disease from another person

It is transmitted by the bite of a certain type of tick called *Ixodes dammini*. Ticks must usually be attached to the body for several hours before they can transmit the Lyme disease bacteria (*Borrelia burgdorferi*). Very few tick bites will result in Lyme disease.

Symptoms appear 3 to 32 days after tick bite.

Most people with Lyme disease will get a characteristic rash called erythema migrans (EM) where they were bitten. The rash starts as a small red area which expands in a circular manner to two or more inches across. The center of the rash may clear giving a "bull's eye" appearance. Other symptoms such as fever, headache, tiredness, stiff neck, joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes may also appear. If untreated, the heart, nervous system, or joints may be affected weeks to months later.

Anyone can get Lyme disease

People who spend time outdoors in tick-infested areas (wooded, bushy, or grassy places) are at an increased risk of exposure. A person can get Lyme disease more than once.

Blood tests are available

Blood tests taken in the early stage of illness when treatment should begin, may be negative. During this stage, diagnosis is usually made on signs and symptoms and history of tick bite. The tests may remain negative in persons successfully treated early with antibiotics. Blood tests are usually positive after 30 days.

Lyme disease can be treated; see your doctor if you think you have Lyme disease

Treatment for Lyme disease is based on early signs and symptoms and a history of a tick bite or tick exposure. Early treatment will prevent later complications.

You can prevent Lyme disease:

- Inspect your body (including the hair on your head) for ticks after being outdoors
- Use tick repellent—follow directions on the package label
- Minimize bites by walking in the middle of the paths and staying clear of tick-infested areas
- Wear light colored clothes to help spot ticks
- Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts
- Tuck pant legs into socks, and tuck shirt into pants when hiking
- Remove attached tick by grasping the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pulling straight back with a steady force; use forceps or tweezers if available; protect bare hands by using gloves, cloth, or tissue; do not squeeze the tick's body

Clean the bite site after removing a tick as you would with any minor wound