

Lyme Disease

FACTSHEET

Tick-Borne Borreliosis/ Lyme Arthritis

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What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease transmitted by the bite of a tick. Lyme disease may cause symptoms affecting the skin, nervous system and/or the joints of an individual. Not all ticks are infected with Lyme disease.

Who gets Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease can occur in persons of all ages and both sexes. People who spend time outside where infected ticks are common, such as grassy or wooded locations, are at an increased risk of exposure. The infection occurs primarily during late spring and summer, with a peak in June and July, but may occur throughout the year.

What are the symptoms of Lyme Disease?

The symptoms of lyme disease include a red, slowly expanding "bull's eye" rash accompanied by general tiredness, fever, stiff neck, muscle aches, and joint pain. If left untreated, weeks to months later some people may develop arthritis, neurologic abnormalities, inflammation of the brain, and rarely, cardiac problems.

How is Lyme Disease spread?

Lyme disease is spread through the bite of an infected tick. The tick does not usually infect the individual until it has been attached for 24 to 36 hours. Therefore, it is important to check your skin daily for ticks.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually begin within a month of the tick bite.

Is a person with Lyme Disease contagious?

No, the disease is not spread from person-to person.

How is Lyme Disease treated?

There are several antibiotics available for the treatment of Lyme disease.

Should a person with Lyme Disease be excluded from work or school?

It is not necessary to exclude a person with Lyme disease from work or school.

How can Lyme Disease be prevented?

To reduce your risk of acquiring Lyme disease you need to reduce your exposure to ticks. Some ways that this can be done include:

- Use of insect repellents containing DEET.
- Wear light colored clothing that covers legs and arms so that ticks may be more easily seen and removed.
- Tucking pants into socks and/or boots.
- Tucking shirts into pants.
- Do a daily tick check; examine all parts of the body daily for the presence of ticks.
- Remove ticks promptly. Remove ticks by using gentle, steady traction with tweezers applied close to the skin to avoid leaving parts in the skin. Following removal clean the bite area with soap and water.

Want more information?

Additional information about lyme disease and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call 202-442-9371.

