

## What can I do?

### ★IMPORTANT FACT:

Ticks like areas that are warm and moist!

Focus your tick checks on:  
→ arm pits, knees, groin, scalp, back of neck and behind your ears! ←

- Learn the early signs of tick-borne illness
- Wear high rubber boots if walking through areas with ticks which locate themselves close to the ground
- Wear light colored clothing (and a long sleeve shirt) and tuck your pants into your socks when in tick infested areas (you will be able to see ticks easily with light colored clothing!)
- Application of insect repellents containing DEET to clothes and exposed skin should also help reduce the risk of tick attachment
- DEET can be used safely on children and adults but should be applied according to Environmental Protection Agency guidelines to reduce the possibility of toxicity
- Consult your doctor after tick bites

Since transmission of *B. burgdorferi* from an infected tick is **unlikely to occur before 24-36 hours** of tick attachment, check for ticks **daily and remove them promptly.**

Embedded ticks should be removed by using fine-tipped tweezers. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic.

### ★IMPORTANT FACT:

→ You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by removing leaf litter, and brush and wood-piles around your house and at the edge of your yard. By clearing trees and brush in your yard, you can reduce the likelihood that deer, rodents, and ticks will live there. ←

## Can my pet transmit Lyme disease to me?

Yes, but not directly. People get Lyme disease when they are bitten by ticks carrying *B. burgdorferi*.

Ticks that carry Lyme disease are very small and can be hard to see and can attach themselves to your pets.

It is important to treat your pets with a medication (ask your Vet) to prevent ticks and fleas and to also check their skin/fur for these pesky insects.

## Resources:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) – search **LYME**

Lyme disease Association:  
[www.lymediseaseassociation.org](http://www.lymediseaseassociation.org)

Kid's Health – great article for kids!  
[http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial\\_viral/lyme.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/lyme.html)

## York Hospital Infection Control

*If you have any questions about LYME or other Infection Control issues, please call:*

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# The facts about LYME

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## What is LYME?

Lyme disease is a tick-borne zoonosis (a disease shared between animals and people) caused by infection with the spirochete, *Borrelia burgdorferi* found in the "deer tick."

These tiny ticks bite mice infected with Lyme disease and then bite people or other animals, such as dogs and horses, passing the disease to them.

Within 1 to 2 weeks of being infected, people may have a "bull's-eye" rash with fever, headache, and muscle or joint pain. Some people have Lyme disease and do not have any early symptoms. Other people have a fever and other "flu-like" symptoms without a rash.



## When can I get the disease?

You can get Lyme disease anytime of the year, however; young ticks (nymphs – which are the size of a poppy seed!) are most active during warm months: **MAY & JULY**.

Adult ticks (size of a sesame seed) are most active during **FALL and SPRING**.

## Symptoms of LYME

### Typical (early) symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Stiff neck
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Characteristic (bull's eye) skin rash.

This rash occurs in approximately **70-80%** of infected persons and begins at the site of a tick bite after a delay of **3-30 days**. A distinctive feature of the rash is that it gradually expands over a period of several days, reaching up to 12 inches across. The center of the rash may clear as it enlarges resulting in a bull's-eye appearance. It may be warm but is not usually painful.

In some cases, these may be the only symptoms of infection.

After several days and weeks the bacteria may spread throughout the body of an infected person. These people can show symptoms as long as several years after the tick bite which can include:

- Rashes in other parts of the body
- Pain that seems to move from joint to joint
- Signs of inflammation of the heart or nerves
- Bell's palsy (facial weakness)
- Arthritic knees, elbows and wrists

## How is LYME disease diagnosed?

Lyme disease is diagnosed based on:

- symptoms,
- physical findings (e.g., rash),
- and the possibility of exposure to infected ticks;

Blood tests may also be performed to detect the body's immune response to the infection.

## Treatment of LYME

Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics. **There is NO VACCINE.**

PLEASE REMEMBER:

*Prompt treatment during the early stages of this disease can prevent later, more serious problems.*

## Important to know . . .

If a tick is attached to your skin for **less than 24-36 hours**, your chance of getting Lyme disease is extremely small.

**Stay safe!** Even if you remove a tick(s) before 24 hours, make sure you monitor your health closely and be alert for any signs and symptoms of tick-borne illness.

**See your doctor immediately if you feel you've been infected!**