



LYME DISEASE

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a zoonotic disease (diseases spread from animals to people) caused by a bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Lyme disease is spread by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick. Ticks are very small insects about three to five millimeters in length. Ticks become infected when they feed on infected deer and small rodents such as mice. Lyme disease is common in United States and also occurs in Canada

What are the symptoms?

Early symptoms develop within a week to a few months after the infected tick bite. In most cases, a rash develops near the site of the bite and may resemble a bull's eye target. Other symptoms, such as fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, muscle and joint pain and swollen lymph nodes may develop. If left untreated, additional symptoms may develop; these can include severe fatigue, arthritis, heart abnormalities or nervous system complications.

How is Lyme disease spread?

Lyme disease is spread by the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Ticks attach by their mouth parts on bare skin and feed on blood. A tick can spread the bacteria after it has been attached and feeding on a person for 24 to 36 hours.

How is Lyme disease diagnosed?

Lyme disease is diagnosed by symptoms, history of exposure and laboratory testing.

Who is at risk of Lyme disease infections?

People who live or work in tick-infested areas are at greatest risk. Depending on the abundance of infected ticks, some areas are a higher risk.

How can Lyme disease be prevented?

Wear protective clothing, such as pants and long-sleeved shirts, to limit the access of ticks to your skin.

Use insect repellents containing DEET or other approved ingredients.

Check for ticks on clothing and skin after being outdoors and remove them immediately. Use tweezers and grasp the tick's head as close to the skin as possible, pull slowly until the tick is removed.

See your family doctor if, within 30 days of removing a tick, you develop a rash or if you have flu-like symptoms.

How is Lyme disease treated?

Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics. Early treatment almost always results in full recovery.

What is the Public Health response?

Health care providers and laboratories must notify cases of Lyme disease to Public Health. Public Health staff may interview the health care provider and patient (or caregivers) to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people at risk of infection, implement control measures and provide other advice.

Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, local [Public Health office](#), or Telecare 811.

Useful websites:

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca