



## 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 tick. There are approximately 20,000 cases of Lyme Disease in the United States each year.

### Who gets Lyme Disease?

Lyme Disease can be contracted by people of any age. People who spend time in the typical habitat of ticks, wooded or grassy areas, have an increased risk of contracting the infection. People who participate in outdoor activities such as yard work, hiking, camping, fishing or hunting are at a higher risk for getting Lyme Disease. Those employed in landscaping, brush clearing, forestry and park management also experience higher rates of Lyme Disease.



### How is Lyme Disease transmitted?

Lyme Disease is spread to humans by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks can attach to any part of the body to bite and feed. The tick usually must attach for 36-48 hours for the Lyme Disease bacterium to be transmitted. Most humans are infected by young ticks called nymphs. Nymphs are about 2mm or the size of a head of a pin. There is no evidence that Lyme Disease is transmitted from person to person, meaning a person cannot be infected from touching or kissing an infected person.

### What are the symptoms of Lyme Disease?

People infected with Lyme Disease normally develop a large, circular rash around or near the site of the tick bite. Multiple rash sites may appear. Other symptoms can include:

- Chills
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Stiff neck
- Swollen glands
- Muscle or joint pain

If left untreated, meningitis, facial palsy, arthritis and heart abnormalities can occur.

### How long does it take symptoms to appear?

Symptoms begin to develop within a month of becoming infected. Onset can range from 3 to 32 days.



## 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?

Lyme Disease can be effectively treated with antibiotics. Early diagnosis improves the outcome of treatment so it is important to contact your healthcare provider if you are feeling sick or develop a rash.

## How can I help prevent myself from getting Lyme Disease?

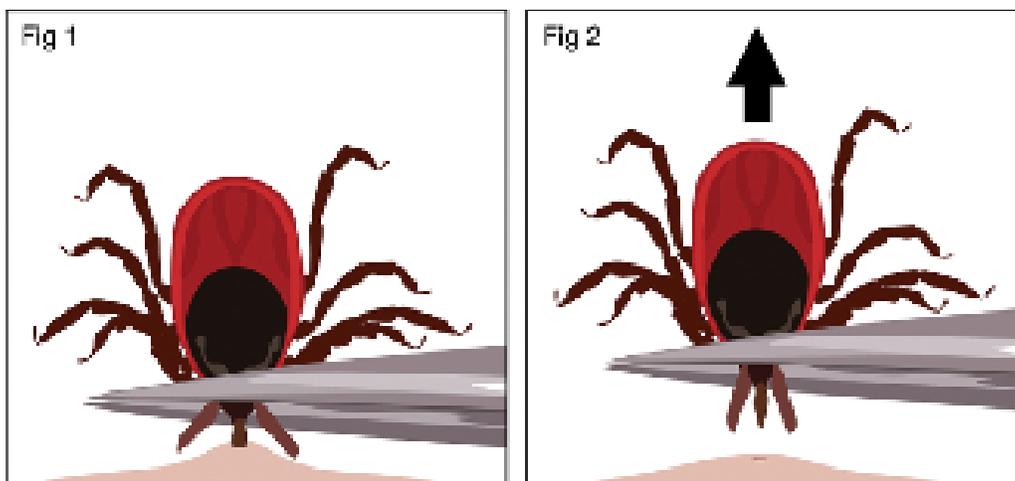
When in tick-infested habitats such as wooded or grassy areas:

- 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, products containing 20% or more of DEET are effective in repelling ticks
- Check clothing and skin every two hours for ticks
- Thoroughly check your body for attached ticks at the end of the day

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

## How should a tick be removed from skin?

Ticks should be removed as soon as they are discovered. Use tweezers to grasp the mouthparts of the tick as close as possible to your skin. If tweezers are not available, use a tissue or rubber gloves. Do not handle a tick with bare hands. Be careful not to squeeze, crush or puncture the tick as it may contain infectious fluids. After removing the tick, disinfect the tick site with rubbing alcohol or antibacterial wash. Wash hands with hot water and soap. If you are concerned that the tick was not completely removed, contact your doctor.



## For more information:

Call Huron County Public Health at 419-668-1652 or visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)