

Lyme Disease

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is transmitted to people by the bite of an infected deer ticks (known as black-legged ticks).

A deer tick has different life stages and ranges in size from about the size of a pinhead to the size of a sesame seed. Deer ticks live in wooded and brushy areas. You will rarely find deer ticks in grassy areas.

Ticks can't jump or fly and they don't fall from trees. They grab onto people as they walk by.

Lyme disease occurs mostly in northeastern and north central states. The highest risks for being bitten by a deer tick in Minnesota and Wisconsin are April through July and September through October.

People may be at risk for exposure to deer ticks from:

- jobs such as landscaping, brush clearing, forestry, or management of parks or wildlife
- recreational activities such as hiking, camping or staying in a cabin.

Lyme disease is not contagious. It can't be spread from person to person.

Who Can Get Lyme Disease?

Anyone in areas described above can get Lyme disease.

What are the Signs of Lyme Disease?

Signs of Lyme disease are:

- a red rash that looks like a target (with a clear center) or many targets
- fever or chills
- joint and muscle aches
- headache
- fatigue.

How is Lyme Disease Found?

Your health care provider will look for a rash (looks like a target). They may:

- ask for your history of possible exposure to deer ticks
- give you a physical exam
- do blood test based on your symptoms.

How is Lyme Disease Treated?

An antibiotic (medicine) will help treat Lyme disease. Be sure to take the entire prescription, even if you start to feel better. If left untreated, Lyme disease can lead to nerve, joint (arthritis), brain and heart problems.

(over)

How Can You Prevent Lyme Disease?

- Dress in a long-sleeved shirt and long pants if you are going to be hiking or in a wooded area. If possible, dress in light-colored clothing to help make ticks stand out.
- Spray insect repellent that has up to 30 percent DEET on your skin or clothing.
- Check your body and scalp carefully for ticks if you have been outside.

How do You Remove a Tick?

If you find a tick embedded in your skin, follow these steps:

- Use tweezers to grasp the tick toward its head. Do not try to pull the tick out by its body.
- Pull the tick out slowly. Try not to squeeze it.
- Put an antiseptic ointment or rubbing alcohol on the tick bite site.

If the head of the tick does not fully come out, do not worry. The tick will no longer be able to spread the disease once the body is gone.

**Information adapted from the
Minnesota Department of Health.**