



Lyme Disease

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Lyme disease is caused by a spiral-shaped bacteria (spirochete) called *Borrelia Burgdorferi*. Lyme disease can affect people of any age. It is transmitted via the bite of infected blacklegged (deer) ticks. Most people with Lyme disease become infected during the late spring, summer, and early fall when immature and adult ticks are out looking for their meals. Nymph blacklegged ticks are very small (about the size of a poppy seed). Blacklegged ticks cannot jump or fly. Instead, they seek hosts by climbing on vegetation such as grasses or shrubs and wait for a host to rub against them. When this occurs, they climb onto the host's body and eventually attempt to attach and feed. People who spend time in forest/wooded or grassy environments are at a higher risk. Most Lyme disease cases are connected with activities around the home (play, yard or garden work).

A pet may carry a tick home resulting in a tick bite without the person being outdoors. A veterinarian can suggest ways to protect your pets.

Lyme disease is known as a "Great Imitator" because of its undetermined and misleading symptoms and may be confused with other diseases plus there are test inaccuracies. Lyme disease has been misdiagnosed as Arthritis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Alzheimer's and others. Symptoms vary from person to person. Symptoms may come and go or may persist. Some symptoms may not appear until weeks, months or years after a tick bite occurs. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics.

Most common symptoms of Lyme disease are: headache; chills and fever; muscle or joint pain, swelling, stiffness; Lyme disease rash ("Bull's eye"). In some people this rash *never* appears. Other possible symptoms are: fatigue; anxiety, depression, panic attacks; forgetfulness; poor short-term memory; difficulty thinking, confusion, poor attention; problem learning new information; difficulty with concentration; disorientation.

Do not let Lyme disease interfere with your love of the outdoors. Wear light-colored clothing so that you can see ticks that get on you. Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Wear enclosed shoes. Tuck pant legs into socks or shoes, and tuck shirts into pants. Wear a hat for extra protection. Spray insect repellent containing DEET on clothes and exposed skin other than the face. Make your yard tick-proof. On returning home, remove, wash and dry clothing at high temperatures. Carefully inspect your entire body and remove any attached ticks. Also, carefully inspect children, infirm adults, and pets. Save the tick for possible identification by a qualified professional.

The information is for *educational purposes only*. This does **NOT** substitute for medical advice. Call your doctor if you get a fever or rash. If you think you may have Lyme disease, contact your doctor. Do not be afraid to get a second opinion. The *Pike County Lyme Disease Task Force* is available to help you. Contact us at telephone # (570) 503-6334.

Sources:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme>
- http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/diseases_and_conditions/11595
- <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/index.htm>
- <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/lyme/index.shtml>
- <http://www.ilads.org/lyme/about-lyme.php>
- Lyme Disease Patient, Personal Interview, March 2014