

# Lyme Disease

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## WHAT IS LYME DISEASE?

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease spread by deer ticks. Within 1 to 2 weeks of being infected, people may have a "bull's-eye" rash with fever, headache, and muscle pain 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.

## CAN ANIMALS TRANSMIT LYME DISEASE TO ME?

Yes, but not directly. People get Lyme disease when they are bitten by ticks carrying a bacteria. Ticks that carry Lyme disease are very small and can be hard to see.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM LYME DISEASE?

1. Whenever possible, you should avoid entering areas that are likely to be infested with ticks.
2. If you are in an area with ticks, you should wear light-colored clothing so that ticks can be spotted more easily and removed before becoming attached.
3. If you are in an area with ticks, wear long-sleeved shirts, and tuck your pants into your socks.
4. Application of insect repellents containing DEET to clothes and exposed skin. 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.
5. Since transmission of the bacteria from an infected tick is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment, check for ticks daily and remove them promptly. To remove the tick, use tweezers to grasp it firmly by the head or as close to the skin as possible - then pull steadily until it releases. Be sure to call your healthcare provider if you notice any irritation in the area or symptoms of Lyme disease.
6. You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by removing leaf litter, and brush and wood-piles.

## TICK REMOVAL

Remove a tick from your skin as soon as you notice it. Use fine-tipped tweezers to firmly grasp the tick very close to your skin. With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from your skin. Then clean your skin with soap and warm water. Throw the dead tick away with your household trash.

Avoid crushing the tick's body. Do not be alarmed if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit the Lyme disease bacteria. If you accidentally crush the tick, clean your skin with soap and warm water or alcohol.

