



Talkin' Ticks & Lyme Disease

What Is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is caused by an infection from *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The bacteria is transferred to humans and pets via the blacklegged tick (or deer tick, *Ixodes scapularis*). In most cases, the tick must be attached for 36-48 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted. Most Lyme infections are caused by the ticks in their 'nymph' form. In this form, they are very small (and less than 2mm) and difficult to spot. Our most common ticks, Lone star ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*), the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), the Rocky Mountain wood tick (*Dermacentor andersoni*), and the brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) and not known to transmit Lyme.

What Are the Symptoms?

While some people show no reaction to Lyme disease, others are seriously affected by it. 70-80% of infected people develop a reddish "bull's-eye" or an expanding red ring around the bite site and flu-like symptoms. Symptoms can include paralysis on one or both sides of the face (known as Bell's Palsy) severe headaches and neck stiffness due to meningitis, and painful swelling of the joints. Seek medical attention if you develop these symptoms or if you think you have been exposed to Lyme Disease. The disease can be cured through antibiotics but the sooner it is treated the better.

How to Avoid Tick Bites:

There is no way to prevent being bitten by a tick. The key to preventing Lyme Disease is to reduce your chances of exposures to ticks and, if you have been bitten, to remove the tick before the 36-48 window for transmitting the diseases

Reducing Your Chances of Exposure:

Walk on Trails: Sticking to the trail instead of walking through the woods reduces your chance of brushing up against tick nests. Yet another great reason to keep your dog on a leash in the woods!

Dress to Protect: Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks. Wear light colored clothes to easily spot ticks.

Use Repellent: Use repellents that contain 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on the exposed skin for protection that lasts up to several hours. Use products that contain permethrin on clothing (do NOT use Permethrin on your skin!). Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents. It remains protective through several washings. *Follow all instructions carefully for both DEET and Permethrin applications.

Carry Duct Tape: As if we needed another reason to carry duct tape! Duct tape can be a wonderful tick catcher. When coming in from the outdoors, run the sticky side of the duct tape down your clothing, equipment, and unshaven legs. This is especially helpful if you've come in contact with a nest of ticks.

Protect Your Pets: Use a flea comb to comb through your pets hair after a jaunt through the woods. This may catch ticks if they haven't already attached. Talk to your vet about flea and tick repellents that you can apply to your animal monthly.

Removing the Tick

Tick Checks: Do a tick check on humans, animals, clothing, tents, and any other items used in the outdoors.

Slow and Steady: Gently grasp the tick with tweezers and pull, slowly and steadily, until the tick releases. Use a cotton ball with rubbing alcohol or peroxide to clean the area.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/>

The visitor center is open daily from 9:00am to 5:00pm, except Christmas, New Year's, and Thanksgiving Days.

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