



Communicable Diseases LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a bite from a tick. Ticks, seen mostly in summer months, are small insects that will stick to the skin and suck the blood. The tick is brown or black and may be as small as the period at the end of this sentence.

Symptoms to look for:

Within 3-30 days after the bite, most people will get a red patch or rash where they were bitten. The rash begins as a small-reddened area and gets larger and larger until it is several inches across. It may be faded in the middle and have a darker sharper edge. Other symptoms are:

- Fever.
- Headache.
- Tiredness.
- Stiff neck or soreness all over.
- Pain or swelling in the joints.

The pain and swelling in the knees may occur weeks to years after the bite, if untreated.

If a tick bites someone, do not panic. It takes 24 hours for the tick to

transmit the disease. Removing the tick may help to stop the spread of Lyme disease in the system. Use tweezers or your fingers to grasp the body of the tick and remove it gently. If using your fingers, use tissue or gloves to remove the tick and then wash your hands thoroughly. Mark the date on the calendar and if you get symptoms within a few days or weeks of the date, call the doctor.

Treatment with medications from the doctor helps to prevent any serious illness. Treatment is best if given in the early stages of the disease.

To prevent the infection:

- Avoid tick-infested areas when possible.
- Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts in tick-infested areas and tuck pants into socks.
- Use tick repellents on all exposed flesh.
- Check frequently for ticks on the skin, especially on children. Check pets they may also get tick bites and carry Lyme disease.