



# Lyme Disease



## What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial illness caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Humans can become infected when bitten by an Ixodes scapularis tick (black-legged or deer tick).

## How is Lyme Disease spread?

Lyme disease is spread through the bite of an *Ixodes scapularis* tick. The tick attaches to a host animal (wild or domestic) such as a deer, field mouse, or bird that may be infected. Once the tick releases itself carrying the bacteria, it attaches to a new host which could be a human. The tick must be attached for 24 hours or more to transfer the bacteria to its new host.

## How is Lyme Disease treated?

- If you have been bitten by a tick and/or develop symptoms, see your doctor immediately.
- Antibiotics can be given to kill the bacteria and may help prevent complications.

## How can Lyme Disease be prevented?

- Avoid areas that are tick infested, moist, brushy, wooded or overgrown with low lying vegetation.
- Wear light colored clothing that covers arms and legs so that ticks can be more easily seen and removed. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing and exposed skin or permethrin to clothing.
- If working or playing in wooded or grassy areas, check your skin at least once daily.
- If a tick is found remove it by firmly gripping the body close to the skin with a pair of tweezers and pull straight out. Cleanse the area with soap and water.
- After removal, keep tick in a sealed container with moist paper towel and

contact the health department regarding tick identification.

## Symptoms of Lyme Disease:

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease usually develop 7-14 days after a tick bite, but can show up as early as 3 days or as late as 32 days.

- “Bulls eye” rash
- Fever
- Muscle and joint aches
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Some people become infected but have no symptoms or very mild symptoms

Jackson County Health Department  
1715 Lansing Ave.  
Jackson, MI 49202  
(517) 788-4420  
[www.co.jackson.mi.us](http://www.co.jackson.mi.us)  
Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
CDC Public Information



English 1-888-246-2675  
Espanol 1-888-246-2857  
TTY 1-888-874-2646