

PLAYING IT SAFE



Get the Facts About Lyme Disease

Important information for outdoor workers

Lyme disease was first discovered after an unusual outbreak of arthritis in Lyme, Connecticut in 1975. Today, Lyme disease is widespread across the United States, but the highest risk of exposure is in wooded areas during spring and summer months.

All About Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is a bacterium typically carried by mice and other small rodents. It is transmitted through ticks that have previously bitten infected animals and then bite humans. When these infected insects attach to the human body, they slowly feed and transmit the disease within 36 to 48 hours. Young ticks are prevalent in late spring and early summer, although adult ticks can transmit the infection as well. Adult ticks are larger and much easier to spot, but young ticks can be as small as a pinhead.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of Lyme disease typically develop within two weeks of the tick bite. Although a majority of those infected develop a rash in the shape of a bull's-eye surrounding the bite, 20 to 40 percent of people do not exhibit this symptom at all. Instead, they may develop flu-like symptoms including fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, neck stiffness, fatigue, headaches, and migrating joint aches or muscle aches.

If you suspect that you may have contracted Lyme disease, seek medical

attention. A simple blood test can confirm whether you have the disease. If you test positive, the medical professional will prescribe antibiotics to kill the infection. Left untreated, Lyme disease can cause arthritis, muscle pain, heart disease, and brain and nerve disorders.

Preventing Lyme Disease

- Avoid tick habitats, which include brushy, overgrown, grassy and woody areas.
- Wear light-colored clothing to see ticks more easily.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and closed-toed shoes or boots when working in grassy or wooded areas. Tuck your pants into your boots.
- Use tick and bug repellent on your skin. Although permethrin is not safe to use on your skin, it is effective at deterring ticks when used on your clothing.
- After working outside, check body areas where ticks are commonly found, including behind the knees, between fingers and toes, armpits, behind ears, on the neck and wherever there is hair.
- Shower well, and wash and dry your clothing at high temperatures after you have been working outside.

If you find any ticks on your body, remove them with a tweezers and clean the area with an antiseptic. If you feel sick or notice a rash, seek medical attention immediately.

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