
Lyme Disease

Description: Lyme disease is an infection caused by bacteria. It is diagnosed by signs and symptoms and a blood test.

Symptoms: A typical early symptom is a slowly expanding red rash (However, not everyone gets a rash.) The rash often starts as a flat or raised red area that slowly gets bigger after several days, sometimes reaching several inches across. The center may become clear, remain even or develop blistering or scabbing. The rash fades after several weeks if not treated. Other symptoms include fatigue, headache, pain or stiffness in muscles or joints and swollen glands. Weeks or months after disease onset, the person may develop arthritis, heart symptoms or nervous-system symptoms.

How it is Spread: Lyme disease is not spread from person to person. It can be spread only by the bite of a specific tick. This type of tick lives in wooded areas and areas with high grass. Animals such as dogs and cats can carry the ticks home. The ticks that spread Lyme disease are not commonly found in Ohio.

Incubation Period: 3-32 days after a tick bite.

How Long Can a Person Spread the Infection To Others? Lyme disease cannot be spread from one person to another.

Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers:

- Report Lyme Disease to the local health department. They will probably already know about it because blood tests are performed there.
- If a child is bitten by a tick or a tick is found on the child's body, be sure to tell the parents. If the child becomes ill, the parents can tell the doctor so LD can be considered.

Control/Prevention: Even though Lyme disease is not common in Ohio, take the following precautions just in case:

- Keep yard and play areas mowed.
- Do not allow children to play in tall grass.
- Closely check the children's bodies (and your own) for ticks after field trips through woods or tall grass. It is important to quickly remove a tick from the body (within 36 hours).
- If you find a tick, use tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Slowly pull the tick straight out. Do not yank, as this may result in leaving the mouthpiece in the skin. Do not use hot matches, cigarettes, alcohol or nail polish remover. Put the tick in a small container of alcohol and throw in the trash can. Wash your hands and the bite site well.

Treatment: Only a doctor can diagnose Lyme disease. It is easily treated with antibiotics, especially when found early.