

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease is caused by a spirochete (a kind of bacterium), *Borrelia burgdorferi*, that is transmitted by a tick called the black-legged tick (formerly called the deer tick). Lyme disease can cause symptoms affecting the skin, nervous system, heart and/or joints.

Symptoms

- The first symptom is usually an expanding red rash, which starts at the site of the tick bite, a few days to a few weeks after the tick bite.
- Fever, headache, muscle aches and joint pain may also occur.
- If it goes untreated, later symptoms can include recurring rash, joint pain, heart disease and nervous system disorders.

Treatment

- Treatment with oral antibiotics during the early stages of Lyme disease reduces the likelihood of later symptoms.
- Alternative or experimental treatment is not recommended.
- Taking antibiotics for every tick bite has not been beneficial, and is not recommended.

Prevention

- When working or hiking in areas with ticks, wear light colored long-sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into socks, and closed shoes (not sandals).
- Use tick repellent spray on clothing.
- After outdoor activities, wash clothing and check each person's body, including hair, for ticks.
- Pets can also get Lyme disease, so check them too.

Additional Information

- A tick can be removed by grasping its head with thin tipped tweezers and pulling straight out without jerking or twisting. Prompt removal of ticks can prevent disease transmission, because there is evidence that ticks must be attached for at least 24 hours for transmission of Lyme disease to occur.
- Do not touch tick with bare hands.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdrsinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

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