

## How can I tell if I am at risk for Lyme disease?

Risk factors include, but are not limited to, individuals who:

- Live in areas where Lyme disease is present
- Have a prior history of Lyme disease
  - An indication that a person is often in a tick-infested area
- Work outdoors, especially in contact with grass or woods
  - For example: landscaping, brush clearing, forestry and wildlife and parks management
- Use grassy or wooded areas recreationally
  - For example: hiking, camping, fishing and hunting
- Travel to areas with a high incidence of Lyme disease
- Own pets that they take outdoors

Many people living in areas with a high incidence of Lyme disease have contracted it in their own backyard.

## How would I know if I had Lyme disease?

### Signs and symptoms

If you think either you or a family member might have Lyme disease, speak with your doctor about possible diagnosis and treatment as soon as possible. The early stage of Lyme disease is characterized by one or more of these symptoms:

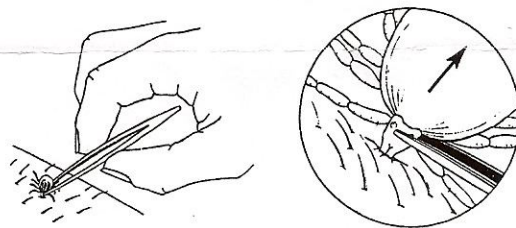
- Erythema migrans, including the characteristic bull's-eye rash
- Fever or chills
- Muscle or joint pain
- Headache
- Fatigue

## What should I do if I find a tick on a family member or me?

Proper and prompt tick removal can greatly reduce the risk of getting Lyme disease. The longer a tick has to feed, the greater the opportunity to transmit disease.

### Removing the tick

Try to find a quiet, well-lit place to remove the tick with tweezers. A blunt-tip, fine-point tweezer is generally the best tool for tick extraction. Try to get as close to the tick's mouthparts as you possibly can. Then, with steady and gentle pressure, pull the tick straight back.



Proper Tick Removal

To dispose of the tick after it is removed, place it in a sealable plastic bag and then in the trash outside your home.

### Dispelling the myths

What not to do when a tick is embedded in your skin:

- **Do not twist, poke at, squash or burn the tick**
  - Any of these actions may cause the tick to either break and remain lodged in your skin or regurgitate or salivate the infected fluids into your bloodstream
- **Do not smother the tick with petroleum jelly, alcohol or any other substance**
  - This does not work because ticks generally store enough oxygen to continue feeding
- **Do not use your fingers to remove the tick or to crush it after removal**
  - This may also lead to infection