

Lamoille Health Partners Lyme Disease FAQs

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease spread to humans through the bite of infected ticks. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a skin rash called erythema migrans (EM). Left untreated, infection can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.



E.M. rash

How is Lyme Disease Treated?

Diagnosis is based on signs and symptoms, the likelihood of tick exposure, consideration of other causes, and sometimes laboratory testing. Most cases of positive Lyme disease can be treated successfully with antibiotics. Treatment of early disease is 10-14 days of an antibiotic (Doxycycline, Amoxicillin, or Cefuroxime). Lyme disease diagnosed in later stages may require more involved treatments.

Should I automatically be treated for Lyme if I have a tick bite?

No, not all tick bites require treatment. In general, the recommendation is to see your healthcare provider if you develop any rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick.

However, in areas highly endemic for Lyme disease, a single prophylactic dose of doxycycline (200 mg for adults or 4.4 mg/kg for children of any age weighing less than 45 kg) may reduce the risk of acquiring Lyme disease after a high-risk tick bite.



This is done **only when all 4 criteria are met:**

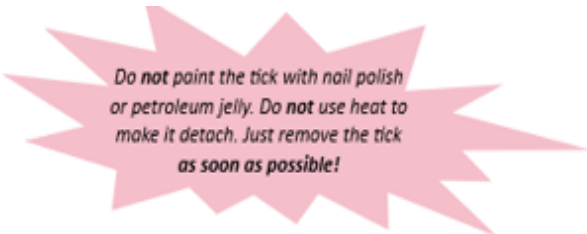
1. Tick bite occurred where ticks are likely infected.
2. Tick was attached longer than 24-36 hours and removed within 72 hours
3. Tick's body was engorged, not flat.
4. Doxycycline is safe for the patient (unless allergic to rx).

What do I do if there is a tick on me?

If you find a tick attached to you, remove it as soon as possible with a plain set of tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick. If mouth parts remain do your best to remove them with the tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth parts easily, *leave them alone* and let the skin heal. You cannot get tick-borne disease from mouth parts alone!

After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water. Never crush a tick with your fingers. Dispose of a live tick by:

1. Putting it in alcohol,
2. Placing it in a sealed bag/container,
3. Wrapping it tightly in tape, or
4. Flushing it down the toilet.



Do not paint the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly. Do not use heat to make it detach. Just remove the tick as soon as possible!

Do I need to see my healthcare provider if I have removed a tick?

Not necessarily. You should monitor the bite area and see your healthcare provider if you develop any rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick.

How do I prevent tick bites and Lyme Disease?



Before you go out, expect ticks will be in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. They can also hitch a ride on pets, clothing, and equipment. Treat clothing and gear with 0.5% permethrin. Treat people with repellants that contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. Check [the EPA list](#) or use this [search tool](#) if you are not sure. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in the center of trails.

After you come indoors, check your clothing for ticks. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks. Check pets and gear. Showering within 2 hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce risk of tick-borne illnesses. Finally, check everyone's body for ticks. A hand-help mirror can help with this. Check these areas in particular:

- Under arms
- Around ears
- Inside belly buttons
- Back of the knees
- In and around the hair
- Between legs

