

## How to Prevent Lyme disease continued

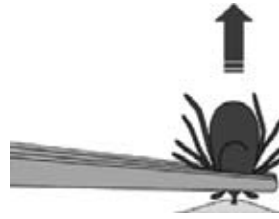
- Tuck pant legs into socks and boots. Wear long-sleeved shirts buttoned at the wrist.
- Check yourself, your children and your pets daily for ticks when you have been in a tick infested-area.
- Apply tick repellent to areas of the body and clothing that may come in contact with grass and brush. Repellents include those containing up to 50% DEET for adults or less than 30% for children. A repellent/pesticide containing 0.5 percent permethrin may be applied to clothing, but should not be used on skin.
- Follow directions carefully and do not overuse repellents. Some tick repellents can cause toxic or allergic reactions.
- Ask your veterinarian to recommend tick control methods for your pets. Animals can get Lyme disease but they do not transmit these diseases to humans. Remember, however, pets can bring ticks into your house.

## How to Remove Ticks

Because ticks do not transmit disease until they have been attached to the host for at least several hours (and sometimes several days), it is very important to remove ticks as soon as they are found. The following is the best way to remove a tick:

- Grasp it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Avoid any twisting or jerking motion that may break off the mouth parts in the skin. Mouth parts left in the wound will not transmit the

disease, but they may cause a minor irritation or infection, similar to a reaction to a splinter.



- If tweezers are not available, protect your fingers with gloves, tissue, or a paper towel. Do not touch the tick with bare fingers. The disease-causing organism can enter the body through a break in the skin on fingers and cause the disease.
- After the tick has been removed, wash hands with soap and water. Apply an antiseptic to the bite site.
- Dispose of the tick by drowning it in alcohol or flushing it down a drain or toilet.
- Tick removal using nail polish, petroleum jelly, alcohol or a hot match is not safe.
- If you get sick, and you have been exposed to ticks, be sure to tell your doctor about your tick exposure.

**For more information, go to:**

**Centers for Disease Control**  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme)

**MD Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene**  
[www.edcp.org/vet\\_med/lyme\\_disease.html](http://www.edcp.org/vet_med/lyme_disease.html)

**Montgomery County Government**  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lymedisease](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lymedisease)  
240-777-1755



Department of  
Health and Human Services

## Preventing Lyme Disease in Montgomery County



# Lyme Disease in Montgomery County - What You Need To Know

Spring and summer bring warm temperatures, just right for walking in the woods and other outdoor activities. Warm weather also means that ticks become active and this can lead to the transmission of Lyme disease.

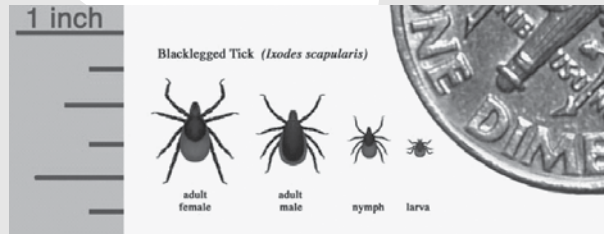
## What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial illness transmitted by a tick bite. Ticks are infected with the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and pass the infection on to humans through the bite. It was first identified in Lyme, Connecticut in 1975. Although the disease is found most frequently in Northeastern and upper Midwest states, many cases are reported each year in Montgomery County.

## How Can You Catch Lyme Disease?

The black legged tick (formerly called deer tick) is the most common carrier of Lyme disease. Ticks are most commonly found in wooded areas or areas with tall grasses and low vegetation.

The life cycle of a tick is approximately two years and Lyme disease can be transmitted at any stage of the life cycle. This is important to know because tick larva and nymphs are very small and hard to see. A nymph is about the size of a pinhead and Larva are smaller. They can easily be missed if one is looking only for adult ticks (see the illustration).



A tick (or larva or nymph) must be attached to a person for several hours in order to infect the individual. It is important to check for and remove ticks, nymphs or larva as soon as possible after you have been in the woods.

## What Are The Symptoms of Lyme Disease?

- Circular or oblong rash, called erythema migrans (EM), at the site of the bite—more than 70 to 90 percent of individuals bitten by an infected tick develop a rash, which can grow from two to three inches in diameter to as much as 20 inches. As it gets bigger, the center of the rash clears giving it a “bull’s eye” appearance. Sometimes multiple rashes occur. The rash does not itch or hurt and so it is not always noticeable.
- Headache
- Fever
- Muscle and joint aches
- General fatigue

If left untreated, Lyme disease can progress to an early phase affecting the joints, nervous system or heart. This occurs several

weeks to months after the tick bite. In a small percentage of infected people, late symptoms may occur months to years later with long term nervous system problems or arthritis.

If you experience these symptoms and have been in an area that may contain ticks, be sure to tell your doctor that you have been in a tick infected area. When Lyme disease is detected early, it is usually mild and easily treated.

## How to Prevent Lyme Disease

Ticks do not jump or fly onto people or animals. They wait on low vegetation and attach to hosts (mice, deer, people, etc.) as they walk by. Follow these steps to protect yourself:

- Avoid tick-infested areas such as tall grass and dense vegetation.
- Walk in the center of mowed trails to avoid brushing against vegetation.
- Keep grass cut and underbrush thinned in yards.
- Follow directions carefully if chemicals are used for tick control or hire a professional.
- Eliminate the living places of small rodents.
- Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks are easier to see and remove.

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