



HEALTH INFORMATION

Lymes Disease

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is spread to humans by infected ticks. Ticks are tiny arachnids found in woodland areas that feed on the blood of mammals, including humans.

Tick bites often go unnoticed and the tick can remain feeding for several days before dropping off. The longer the tick is in place, the higher the risk of it passing on the infection.

What are the symptoms of Lymes Disease?

The earliest and most common symptom of Lymes Disease is a pink or red circular rash that develops around the area of the bite, three to 30 days after someone is bitten. The rash is often described as looking like a bull's-eye on a dart board. You may also experience flu-like symptoms, such as tiredness, headaches and muscle or joint pain. If Lymes Disease is left untreated, further symptoms may develop months or even years later and can include:

- muscle pain
- joint pain and swelling of the joints

Neurological symptoms, such as temporary paralysis of the facial muscles.

A person with Lymes Disease is not contagious because the infection can only be spread by ticks.

Treating Lymes Disease

Oral antibiotic (tablets, capsules and liquids) are recommended for treating Lymes Disease. Most people will require a two to four week course of antibiotics depending on the stage of the condition.

Preventing Lymes Disease

There is currently no vaccine to prevent Lymes Disease. The best way of preventing Lymes Disease is to avoid being bitten when you are in wooded or heath areas known to have a high tick population. The following precautions might help to prevent Lymes Disease:

- Wear a long-sleeved shirt.
- Tuck your trousers into your socks.
- Use insect repellent.
- Check yourself for ticks.
- Check your children and pets for ticks.

If you do find a tick on your or your child's skin, remove it by gently gripping it as close to the skin as possible, preferably using fine-toothed tweezers, and pull steadily away from the skin. Never use a lit cigarette end, a match head or essential oils to force the tick out.

For more information

www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk