

# Pediatric Healthcare

## Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is a treatable infectious disease when caught in the earlier stages. The Lyme disease bacterium is spread through the bite of infected ticks. The blacklegged tick or deer tick spreads the disease in the northeastern United States. Ticks can attach to any part of the human body but are often found in hard-to-see areas such as the groin, armpits and scalp. In most cases, the tick must be attached for 36-48 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted. Most humans are infected through the bites of immature ticks called nymphs. Please refer to the blacklegged tick illustration below. The best approach to ticks is prevention. If you are spending time in a wooded area, wear long pants tucked into socks and a long sleeved shirt. Check for ticks frequently if spending time in these areas or if you have pets at home. Paying close attention the scalp, neck, armpit and groin area.

Tick removal: Use tweezers and grasp the tick close to the skin. Pull the tick straight upward until it releases its grip. Try not to squeeze or jerk to avoid crushing or twisting the tick. If the body is removed, but the head is left in the skin, leave it alone. It will disintegrate or fall off on its own. There is no chance the head spreading disease, as the organisms live in the tick's stomach. Keep the wound clean. Another method of removal for ticks in harder to reach spots like in hair or between toes is using liquid dish soap. You can soak a cotton ball with the soap, leave it on the tick for 30 seconds, and it should be on the cotton ball.

Antibiotic prophylaxis should be used in patients who meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Attached tick is identified as an adult or nymph deer tick
2. Tick is estimated to have been attached > 36 hours.
3. Prophylaxis is begun within 72 hours
4. Pt is > 8 years of age.

Signs and Symptoms of lyme disease:

Please contact the office if your child develops a fever, flu-like symptoms, joint swelling or a bull's eye rash (Erythema Migrans) within 10-14 days of the tick bite.

### Erythema Migrans



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