

Have outdoor fun... Stay tick-free

Tips to avoid Lyme Disease

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Cases of Lyme disease are increasing in Maine. Lyme disease is commonly carried by deer ticks, which are found in wooded or grassy areas.

SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE MAY INCLUDE:



- Rash: Lyme disease often causes a bull's eye like rash. A red, fingertip size bump with a white center forms at the bite site.
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, chills, fatigue, and headache may accompany the rash.
- Joint pain: Several weeks or months after the initial symptoms joint pain may occur.
- Neurological symptoms: If left untreated, serious symptoms may arise such as facial paralysis and muscle weakness. Look for headache, stiff neck, as well as confusion and extreme sleepiness. Meningitis may also occur, which could be fatal.

TREATMENT:

- Contact your health care provider. Oral antibiotics are effective with early diagnosis.
- A more serious infection will require a hospital stay and intravenous antibiotics.



TIPS FOR AVOIDING LYME DISEASE:

- Cover up exposed skin when you are in wooded or grassy areas.
- Look for and remove any ticks that you find. Deer ticks are just slightly larger than a pin head - look carefully. Using blunt tweezers, grab the head of the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward applying even pressure. Do not crush the tick. Once the whole tick has been removed, wash and disinfect the area. Early detection decreases your risk of contracting Lyme disease.
- Check your pets, as well as yourself. Remove ticks before entering your home.

This article was adapted from information from the Mayo Clinic and Center for Disease Control at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/lyme-disease/DS00116> and <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/lyme/>

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Richmond Area Health Center – Richmond
Rangeley Family Medicine – Rangeley
Strong Area Health & Dental Center – Strong
Sheepscot Valley Health Center – Coopers Mills
Western Maine Family Health Center – Livermore Falls