

Lyme Disease Prevention Guide



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Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness and is prevalent all over the world. While awareness of this devastating infection is growing, there is still much the public can do to inform and protect themselves against tick-borne disease. Below are the most important steps for how to prevent Lyme disease.

How to Prevent Tick Bites and Lyme Disease

Avoid Ticks

Knowing how to prevent tick bites means being careful before, during, and after outdoor activity. Plan camping trips and hikes consciously. The most at-risk areas for tick bites are New England, the mid-Atlantic, and the upper Midwest since ticks prefer wooded or grassy areas in moist and humid environments. But even if you don't live in or visit one of these areas, you could still be at risk for tick bites and Lyme disease.

Steer clear of tick habitats such as grassy or wooded areas as well as deer and other animals while out. Stick to paths and trails, and keep yourself, kids, and pets away from bushes, tall vegetation, leaf litter, and fallen logs. Finally, know that some ticks present a danger indoors, even during cooler months.

Protect Yourself

One easy, important way to prevent tick bites is by dressing properly. The more distance you put between ticks and your skin, the better.

Cover yourself with pants, long socks, long sleeves, and well-fitting shoes. You may want to tuck pants into socks or shoes and stick to light-colored clothing (which makes it easier to spot ticks that have clung to fabric). Keep hair neat or tied back, as ticks can hitch rides in long hair.

Another crucial step is to use proper repellent. Most experts recommend repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or lemon eucalyptus oil. You may even consider applying pesticides that target ticks. This is especially important if you live in an area known to harbor ticks. Remember to check with the EPA and local authorities about the best time to apply pesticides, as well as the most effective and safest products to use.

Check Yourself

Checking for and removing ticks is one of the most important lines of defense when it comes to learning how to prevent tick bites. But don't limit your tick checks just to family camping trips or day hikes if you regularly spend time outdoors even for short amounts of time, you should check daily.

Thoroughly check yourself, your children, and your pets in the following areas:

- Underarms and backs of knees
- In and around the ears
- Belly button
- All head and body hair
- Between legs
- Around back and waist

What Are the Chances of Getting Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease transmission is less likely if a tick is attached to your body for less than 24 hours. However, you may be at risk for other tick-borne diseases even in short amounts of time. For these reasons, prompt removal is key.

How to Remove Ticks

As soon as you notice an attached tick, remove it with fine-tipped tweezers. It is important not to crush the tick's body, as this can release more pathogens into your bloodstream. You may want to preserve the tick for your health care professional should you need further testing.

Keep in mind other precautionary actions too, such as taking showers and placing clothes and socks in hot dryers after outdoor activity. Showering removes ticks from the body, and high temperatures can kill ticks that have caught a ride on your clothes.
Be on Alert

If not caught early, Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses can cause serious and chronic health problems that can be devastating for one's quality of life. We can't stress enough the importance of precaution when it comes to preventing Lyme disease. After hikes, camping trips, playing outside, and even gardening, be on alert for signs and symptoms even if you're in an area not known for ticks, and even if you don't remember a tick bite. Tick bites are painless, so you may not notice an attached tick until much later.

Warning Signs

- A tick anywhere on skin, hair, or clothes, attached or not
- A bulls-eye rash (typical of Lyme disease infection)
- Other types of rash near tick site
- Fever, chills, fatigue, body aches, headache, neck stiffness or swollen lymph nodes
- Joint pain and swelling
- Neurological problems in the face, limbs, or muscles

What to Do If You Spot Symptoms

If you suspect you may have contracted a tick-borne illness, it's imperative to get yourself checked by a medical professional. Many tick-borne diseases have similar signs and symptoms, making diagnosis a complex process. It's, therefore, crucial to obtain the right medical expertise and testing for your symptoms and geographical area. Now that you know how to prevent Lyme disease and avoid tick bites, you might still have questions. To learn more about tick-borne illness, [visit our website](#) today.