



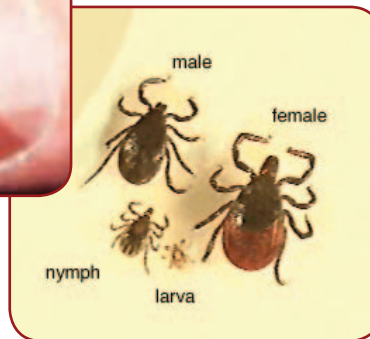
Lyme Disease

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by a bite from an infected blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*, sometimes called a deer tick).

What does the tick look like?

The blacklegged tick is very small and in the larval stage is about the size of a period on this page. The adult tick is orange-brown in color.



Where are the ticks found?

Tick habitat includes wooded areas, marshlands, and tall grassy areas. In the wild, the ticks can be found on birds, mice, raccoons, deer, etc. Domestic animals such as dogs, cats, horses and cows can also carry the tick if they've been in tick-infested areas.

Established colonies of blacklegged ticks have been found in Long Point Provincial Park as well as Rondeau Provincial Park and Point Pelee National Park. More recently, smaller numbers of colonies have been identified in the Turkey Point area. Individual ticks have been found at other sites throughout the province, but investigation to date has not shown any other established colonies.

How do humans get Lyme disease?

Ticks usually come in contact with people or animals by positioning themselves on tall grass and bushes. They may take several hours to find a suitable place on the host to attach to feed.

The ticks are active in warm weather, usually from May to October, but can be active during warm periods in March, April and later in the fall.

How to prevent Lyme disease

- Don't walk barelegged in tall grass, wooded areas or marsh lands.
- Wear long sleeves, slacks and fully-closed boots or shoes when

walking in grassy or wooded areas.

- Tuck pant legs into socks.
- Wear light-coloured clothing to make the ticks easier to find.
- Insect repellents containing DEET are useful and can be sprayed onto clothing, especially pants and socks. Please read the label when using any repellents, in particular when using them on young children.

- Conduct a "tick check" on yourself, your family and your pets after exposure to tick habitat.

Symptoms of Lyme disease

The first symptom in 80% of cases is a circular red skin rash around the bite area within three to 30 days after the bite. The rash may get larger to form a red ring with a clear center. This "bull's-eye" rash can be as large as a "loonie" or

a dinner plate. Other early symptoms may include flu-like symptoms with fatigue, fever, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, and joint pain. In some cases, the bite may cause no reaction.

Fatalities from Lyme disease are rare. However, undiagnosed Lyme disease may develop into chronic disease that may be difficult to treat.

Diagnosis and treatment

A tick bite does not mean that Lyme disease will follow. Not all deer ticks carry Lyme disease. According to the Centres for Disease Control, transmission of infection is unlikely to occur before 36 hours of tick attachment. Prompt removal of the tick will lessen any chance of disease transmission.

If you have been bitten or you suspect that you have been bitten by a blacklegged tick, or develop symptoms, or suspect Lyme disease, see your doctor immediately.