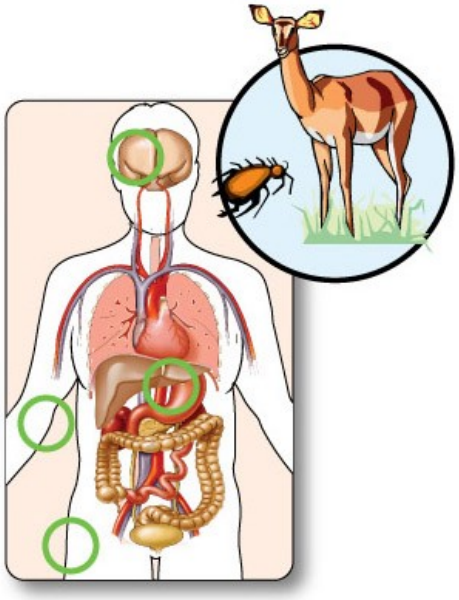
# Lyme Disease

You may have been bitten by a tick and are to watch for the development of Lyme Disease. Lyme Disease is an infection that is caused by a bacteria  The bacteria causing this disease is named *Borreilia burgdorferi*. If a tick is infected with this bacteria and then bites you, then Lyme Disease may occur. These ticks are carried by deer and rodents such as rabbits and mice and infest grassy as well as forested areas. Fortunately most tick bites do not cause Lyme Disease.



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Lyme Disease is easier to prevent than to treat. First, covering your legs with clothing when walking in areas where ticks are possibly abundant will prevent their attachment because ticks tend to stay within inches of the ground.  Second, using insecticides containing DEET can be applied on skin or clothing.  Last, because it takes about 12 to 24 hours for the tick to transmit the disease after attachment to the human host, you should inspect your body for ticks twice a day when you are in areas where Lyme Disease is common. You must look thoroughly when searching for ticks. The Ixodes tick that carries Lyme Disease is very small. It is around the size of a sesame seed (picture of tick is not actual size). Removal is best done by grasping the tick by the head and pulling it out. Do not to squeeze the body of the tick. This could inject the infecting bacteria into the bite site. Wash the area of the bite with an antiseptic solution after removal.

Lyme Disease is a disease that may affect many body systems. Because of the small size of the biting tick, most people do not notice being bitten. The first sign of an infection is usually a round red rash that extends out from the center of the tick bite. The center of the lesion may be blood colored (*hemorrhagic*) or have tiny blisters (*vesicular*). Most lesions have bright red outer borders and partial central clearing. This rash may extend out many inches in diameter, and multiple lesions may be present. Other symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, chills and fever, general achiness and swelling of lymph glands may also occur. If this first stage of the disease is left untreated, these symptoms may gradually resolve by themselves, or progressive symptoms may occur because of spread of infection to other areas of the body.

Follow up with your caregiver to have testing and treatment if you have a tick bite and you develop any of the above complaints. Your caregiver may recommend preventative (*prophylactic*) medications which kill bacteria (*antibiotics*). Once a diagnosis of Lyme Disease is made, antibiotic treatment is highly likely to cure the disease. Effective treatment of late stage Lyme Disease may require longer courses of antibiotic therapy.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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