

LIFESTYLE

LESSONS



Beware of Ticks

Spending time outdoors is a wonderful way to bond with family and friends, and enjoy nature. But before you head out into the great outdoors, you need to be aware of a danger lurking in the woods—Lyme disease. This bacterial infection is contracted after coming in contact with a deer tick that has feasted off another infected animal. Keep reading to learn more about Lyme disease and how to protect yourself from deer ticks while spending time outdoors.

Lyme Disease

There are three main stages of Lyme disease:

1. **Early localized Lyme disease**—In this stage, a rash develops on the skin at the site of the bite within 30 days. It resembles a bull's-eye and slowly expands, followed by flu-like symptoms.
2. **Early disseminated Lyme disease**—During this stage, moderate skin, joint, nervous system, and heart complications can occur.
3. **Late persistent Lyme disease**—In this third and final stage, the infected person can develop severe joint pain, and nervous system and heart complications.

With these stages in mind, it's clear that avid tick prevention and early recognition of Lyme disease is critical for your well-being.

Preventing Tickborne Disease

Use these tips to avoid coming in contact with a deer tick while outside:

- Wear light-colored clothing to make identifying ticks easier.
- Spray yourself with insect repellent.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants when in wooded areas.
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging trees or bushes.
- Keep long hair tied back so that ticks cannot climb up your hair and get attached to your scalp.
- Wash your body and clothing and inspect your body for ticks afterward. Inspect your dog's hair too if they have been playing in wooded areas.

Removing a Tick

Bacteria from a tick bite do not transmit into your bloodstream for 36 to 48 hours, which lessens your chance of contracting the disease if you find ticks and remove them immediately.

If you find a tick on your body, use tweezers to grab the tick firmly where it has entered the skin. Slowly, yet firmly, pull the tick directly outward. Once the tick is removed, clean the bite thoroughly with a disinfectant and watch the area for any symptoms.

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