

What Is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that spread to humans from ticks.

How is Lyme disease spread?

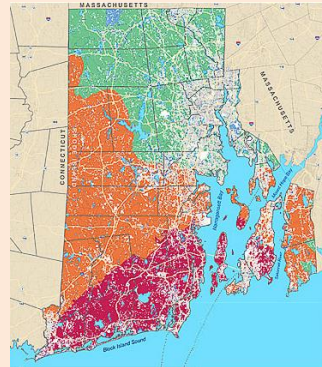
- The only way to get Lyme disease is to be bitten by an infected tick.
- The only tick that can spread Lyme disease is the blacklegged tick (deer tick). Other ticks can spread other diseases.
- You cannot catch Lyme disease from another person.



Deer Ticks

Where do deer ticks live?

Deer ticks are common in wooded areas throughout RI. Ticks can also live in a lawn at the edge of a wooded area. Sometimes, pets can bring ticks into lawns or even houses.



On the map, the red areas have the highest tick densities. The blue areas have the lowest tick densities. Deer ticks are most common in southern RI.

When does Lyme disease occur?

It is possible to get Lyme disease at any time, but it is most common from May to August.

Is Lyme disease a problem in RI?

There were 444 cases of Lyme disease in RI in 2013. Children ages 5-9 are the most likely to get Lyme disease, because they are likely to play outside without checking themselves for ticks. **However, you can protect your children from Lyme disease!**

Lyme Disease Prevention Checklists

What should I do before my child goes outside?

- Dress your child in long pants and sleeves.
- Tuck your child's pants into their socks.
- Make sure that your child is wearing brightly colored clothes. It is easier to see ticks against bright colors.
- Encourage your child to stay on dirt or pavement and avoid walking in grass. Ticks wait on blades of grass, and they can cling to people as they walk by.
- Talk to your doctor about using tick repellents.

What should I do after my child has been outside?

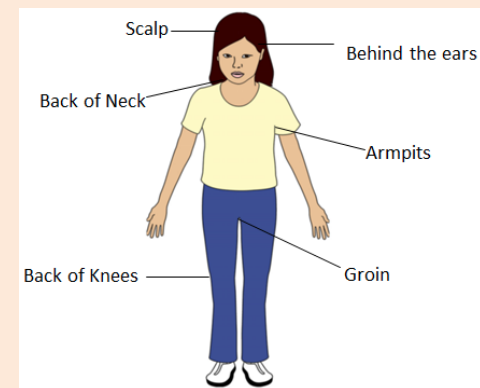
- Check your child for ticks.
- Have your child bathe or shower to help remove ticks you could not find. They should bathe or shower within two hours of coming inside.
- Wash your child's clothing and dry it on high heat for at least an hour. The heat may kill ticks that remain on the clothing.

Why is it important to check for ticks?

Your child is more likely to catch Lyme disease if a tick is attached for a long time. However, your child is much less likely to get Lyme disease if you remove the tick within 24 hours of the bite. This means that it is important to check your child for ticks as soon as they come inside, even if they were not in the woods.

Where on my child should I look for ticks?

- Under the arms
- Inside, behind, or near the ears
- Inside the belly button
- Behind the knees
- On the scalp and near the hair
- Around the waist and between the legs



If I find a tick, how should I remove it?

1. Make sure to use pointy tweezers. Household tweezers are too blunt. They can tear the tick instead of removing it in one piece.
2. Use rubbing alcohol to disinfect the bite and surrounding area.
3. Use the tweezers to grab the tick as close to your child's skin as possible. You should try to grab the tick's head or just above it.
4. Pull out the tick with a slow and steady motion. Try to pull straight out so the tick does not break into pieces.



If the tick's head breaks off and stays in the skin, do not panic. The body is the part of the tick that carries the bacteria. Try to remove the mouth or visit your pediatrician.

What should I do after I remove the tick?

- Consider getting the tick tested. There are labs that will tell you if the tick was carrying Lyme or another disease. A link on the back page will give you a list of these labs.
- Consider taking your child to the doctor. Some doctors will give your child medicine to prevent them from getting Lyme disease.

How do I know if my child has Lyme disease?

Whether your child has been bitten or not, visit your pediatrician if they have any of these warning signs:

- Flu-like symptoms (fever, sore muscles, sore joints, nausea, and fatigue)
- Paralyzed muscles in the face
- Rash (only in some cases of Lyme disease)

If Lyme disease is not treated right away, it can spread to the joints, the heart, and the brain.

Is Lyme disease treatable?

Yes! Antibiotics will cure most cases of Lyme disease. If your child has any of the early warning signs, take them to the doctor right away.

Resources

Lyme Disease Clinic

(401) 793-4020

Imugen, Inc.

(781) 255-0770

Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI)

(800) 723-4432

CT Pathology Laboratories

(860) 450-1823

Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory

(860) 486-3738

TickChek LLC

Toll free: 1-866-713-TICK