

Ask CDC

Lyme Disease

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

Welcome to *Ask CDC*, the weekly podcast that answers *your* questions. I'm your host, Susan Laird. This week, a listener wants to know what Lyme disease is.

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that are spread to people by the bite of a tick. The ticks that transmit Lyme disease are most active in May, June, and July, but you should take steps to prevent tickborne disease from the spring through the fall months. In the north eastern and north central U.S., the black-legged tick, often called the deer tick, spreads the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. In the Pacific states, the disease is spread by the western black-legged tick. Other types of ticks, including the dog tick and the lone star tick, have *not* been shown to transmit Lyme disease. However, there are many other tickborne diseases in the U.S., so prevent and pay attention to all tick bites.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease can include fever, headache, fatigue, and a circular, “bull’s-eye” skin rash. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. It's best to treat the illness as early as possible to avoid more serious complications involving the joints, heart, and nervous system. So if you think you may have been bitten by a tick or have any symptoms that cause you concern, talk to your healthcare provider right away.

The best way to *prevent* Lyme disease, and other tickborne diseases, is to prevent tick bites. Here are some ways to do that:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with a lot of leaf litter;
- Use insect repellent containing DEET to keep ticks off your body;
- Check your skin and clothes for ticks each day after being outdoors; and
- Landscape your yard to create tick-safe zones and talk to a pest control professional about products to help reduce ticks in your yard.

For more information about Lyme disease, please visit www.cdc.gov and select “Lyme Disease” from the A to Z list.

Thanks for listening. To submit *your* question to *Ask CDC*, email us at askcdc@cdc.gov.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.