

Ticks and Lyme Disease



For more information about Lyme disease, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme>

Pregnancy and Lyme disease

Reasons to suspect that you have Lyme disease include:

- You live in a region where Lyme disease is common
- You are experiencing symptoms such as rash, fever, chills, exhaustion, joint or muscle pain, or facial paralysis

Untreated, Lyme disease can be dangerous to your unborn child. Lyme disease that goes untreated can also cause you to have brain, nerve, spinal cord, and heart problems. With early treatment, these complications can be prevented. If you suspect that you may have Lyme disease, see your physician.

What to expect from your appointment

If your doctor thinks that you may have Lyme disease based on your symptoms alone, you will receive 2-4 weeks of antibiotics, most likely amoxicillin.

If your symptoms are not clear-cut, your doctor may decide to have your blood tested. Keep in mind that blood testing is more accurate the longer you have been infected. A blood test for Lyme disease may not appear positive until 4-6 weeks after infection.

Treatment of Lyme disease in pregnancy

- No life-threatening effects on the fetus have been found in cases where the mother receives appropriate antibiotic treatment for her Lyme disease.
- In general, treatment for pregnant women is similar to that of non-pregnant adults, although certain antibiotics, such as doxycycline, are not used because they can affect fetal development.
- A typical treatment would include oral amoxicillin 500 mg three times daily for 2-3 weeks. Women who are allergic to amoxicillin would most likely receive 500 mg cefuroxime axetil twice per day

Lyme disease and breastfeeding

There are no reports of Lyme disease transmission from breast milk.



Facial paralysis.



Bull's eye rash on the back.



Arthritic knee.



When to see your doctor

See a doctor if you develop a fever, a rash, severe fatigue, facial paralysis, or joint pain within 30 days of being bitten by a tick. Be sure to tell your doctor about your tick bite. If you have these symptoms and work where Lyme disease is common, it is important to get treatment right away.

If you do not get treatment, you may later experience severe arthritis and problems with your nerves, spinal cord, brain, or heart.

Antibiotics are used to treat Lyme disease

Your doctor will prescribe specific antibiotics, typically for 2-3 weeks. Most patients recover during this time. You may feel tired while you are recovering, even though the infection is cured.

If you wait longer to seek treatment or take the wrong medicine, you may have symptoms that are more difficult to treat.

Looking ahead to recovery

Take your antibiotics as recommended. Allow yourself plenty of rest. It may take time to feel better, just as it takes time to recover from other illnesses.

Some people wonder if there is a test to confirm that they are cured. This is not possible. Your body remembers an infection long after it has been cured. Additional blood tests might be positive for months or years. Don't let this alarm you. It doesn't mean you are still infected.

Finally, practice prevention against tick bites. You can get Lyme disease again if you are bitten by another infected tick.

Additional information

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/Lyme>
2. The Clinical Assessment, Treatment, and Prevention of Lyme Disease, Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis, and Babesiosis: Clinical Practice Guidelines by the Infectious Diseases Society of America <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/508667>
3. Tick Management Handbook (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven) <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/resources/handbook.pdf>



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