

Health Tips

from New London Hospital



Dr. Gregory Curtis

Lyme Disease

This serious bacterial infection is transmitted by the bite of an infected tick, and can cause many health problems if left untreated. Since Lyme disease is carried by deer ticks and western black-legged ticks who breed in the spring and summer, there is a greater chance of being bitten during these months. (Visit newlondonhospital.org to see photos and more information about ticks.)

When outdoors, here are some tips to prevent being bitten: use tick and insect repellents containing DEET or permethrin; wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to minimize skin exposure; tuck pants into socks to create a barrier; and wear light-colored clothing in order to easily spot ticks.

Check for ticks after outdoor activities. If you have been bitten, carefully remove the tick with fine-tipped tweezers as close to the point of attachment as possible. Removal of the tick within 24 hours will make transmission of the bacteria unlikely. After removal, apply antiseptic or alcohol to bite area. If the tick was engorged and/or clearly attached for more than 24 hours, contact your doctor. Bring the tick to your health care provider's office.

Seek medical attention if you develop any of these symptoms: skin rash, usually resembling a bulls-eye; fever; headache; muscle pain; stiff neck; and swelling of knees and other large joints. Antibiotics will treat Lyme disease in its early stages. If left untreated or there is a delay in diagnosis, long-term problems can arise that affect the heart, joints, and nervous system.

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