

Protecting YOU from LYME DISEASE

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease in Michigan was first found in Southern Menominee County in the Upper Peninsula which borders Wisconsin. It has more recently been found in the tick and rodent population of Berrien, Van Buren, and Allegan Counties. The Deer tick, also known as the black legged tick, transmits Lyme disease through bites.

When an infected tick attaches and feeds, the bacteria (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) is injected into the host along with the saliva. Lyme disease can not be passed from person to person. A human can only get Lyme disease when bitten by an infected deer tick. Lyme disease is most common during the late spring and summer months (May through August) when ticks are

most active and people are enjoying the outdoors.

Deer ticks are very small, and prefer habitats that are shaded or wooded. In Southwest Michigan, the ticks have been found in habitats characterized by sandy soil and oak or maple tree cover. Coastal areas along Lake Michigan are typical of good tick habitat.

Berrien County	Statistics	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Lyme Disease	Count	0	0	2	3	3
	Rate per 100,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Michigan Disease Surveillance System- Completed/Confirmed Cases 2002-2006

How will I know if I have Lyme Disease?

Signs of Lyme Disease include a characteristic "bull's eye" rash, fever, malaise, tiredness, headache, muscle aches, stiff neck, and joint pains. Usually, it takes about seven to fourteen days from when the tick bites

and attaches to the appearance of the rash. Seek prompt medical attention if you develop any signs and symptoms of early Lyme disease. If left untreated some patients may develop arthritis, neurologic abnormalities such as nerve and brain inflammation, and in rare cases, cardiac problems.



Is Lyme Disease Treatable?

Yes! Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. In the case of early disease, a three to four week treatment with antibiotics is usually effective. With late disease it may be necessary to treat with four or more weeks of intravenous antibiotics depending on how bad the disease is.



How can I Avoid Ticks?

You can lower your chances of exposure to Lyme disease by avoiding tick habitats. One important way you can protect yourself is to wear light colored clothing when in areas where exposure is more likely to occur so ticks can be spotted and removed. Also, long sleeved shirts and pants tucked into socks or boots help keep ticks away from your skin. Ticks are

often close to the ground, so wear shoes or boots, not sandals. Applying insect repellents containing Deet to clothes and exposed skin can help to reduce the chance of tick attachment.

If the tick is alive and identified as a deer tick, it can be tested for Lyme disease. Contact the Environmental Health Division of the Berrien County Health Department at 269-927-5623 for instructions.

Berrien County Health

Department:

Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



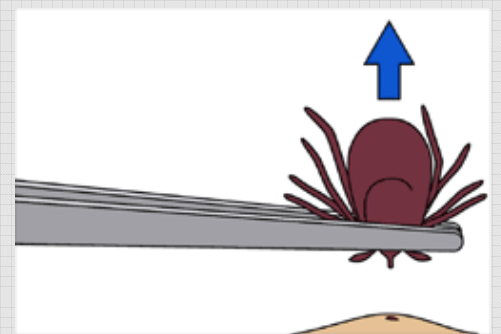
SUMMER SAFETY

May is Summer Safety Month and the Berrien County Health Department will be giving you information throughout the month on summer health issues such as Lyme disease, melanoma or skin cancer detection and prevention, recreational water illness prevention, boater safety, etc. Look for the Benton Spirit Health Page in the weeks to come for more information on keeping your summer healthy and happy!

What to do?

After visiting a possible tick habitat check for ticks. Ticks favor the waistline, thighs, armpit, hairline and head, but may be found anywhere on the body. Remove ticks quickly; ticks need to be attached 48 hours to transmit Lyme disease. Checking yourself for ticks daily and washing thoroughly will prevent almost all tick bites from becoming Lyme disease. Embedded ticks should be removed using fine tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick firmly and as close to the skin as possible.

Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish or other methods to remove ticks. These methods of removal may increase the chance of the bacteria being squeezed out of the tick and into your body.



The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office
2106 S. M-139
927-5623

School Based
870 Colfax Ave
925-4500

Niles

1205 N. Front St.
684-2800

Three Oaks

21 N. Elm
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohthdept.org

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