What is Lyme Disease?

Explanation of what Lyme disease is, how to know if you've been bitten by a tick, how to protect yourself from ticks, and what to do if you have been bitten.

What Is Lyme Disease?
Lyme disease is an infection transmitted by the bite of a tick. Early symptoms include headache, fever, sore throat, and nausea. If left untreated, you may experience debilitating rheumatologic, cardiac, and neurological conditions.

How do you know if you've been bitten?
If you have been bitten by a tick, you may see the tick still attached to your skin. You may also see a red skin lesion that grows over a period of time. The center of the lesion may clear, leaving it ringlike in appearance.

How can you protect yourself?
- Wear light-colored clothing so you may spot ticks more easily.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants; tuck pants into boots.
- Spray insect repellent with DEET on any exposed skin.
- After being outdoors, remove clothing, wash, and dry at a high temperature, and inspect your body carefully.

What to do if you've been bitten
- If the tick is attached to your skin, remove it with tweezers, grasping the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pulling straight back to avoid crushing the tick's body and leaving parts attached to the skin.
- Monitor your condition. Look for skin lesions at the bite area and watch for early symptoms of Lyme disease.
- Talk to your doctor. Depending on your situation, antibiotic treatment may be recommended.

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