

## It's Safe to Go Outside Again



Since its discovery in 1975, Lyme disease has become a serious health threat to both people and pets. From 1982 to 1996, more than 99,000 cases of Lyme disease have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control from virtually every state.

Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection that is spread to people and animals by certain ticks, most commonly deer ticks. These ticks latch onto animals or people who brush against grass or shrubs.

Symptoms of this tick-borne illness in people may include a bull's eye rash around the site of the tick bite, fever, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of appetite, and depression. If undiagnosed and left untreated, the disease can progress to more disabling symptoms, including arthritis and heart abnormalities. Sometimes, in the earliest stages of the disease, there are no symptoms at all.

Fear of Lyme disease, however, should not keep you or your pet from enjoying the great outdoors. New vaccinations are available for both people and pets. Check with your doctor or veterinarian for more information.

In people, the disease in its early stages can usually be treated successfully with antibiotics. However, it can be difficult to diagnose, so it's best to prevent exposure by taking a few simple precautions when walking in the woods or other tick-infested areas.

- Tuck pants into shoes or socks and shirts into pants to keep ticks out
- Wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks easily
- Wear a hat to protect your head
- Use tick repellent to coat exposed skin
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush
- Check family members, including your pets, for ticks when you get home
- (It usually takes about 48 hours of feeding before the tick transmits the disease to its host.)

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