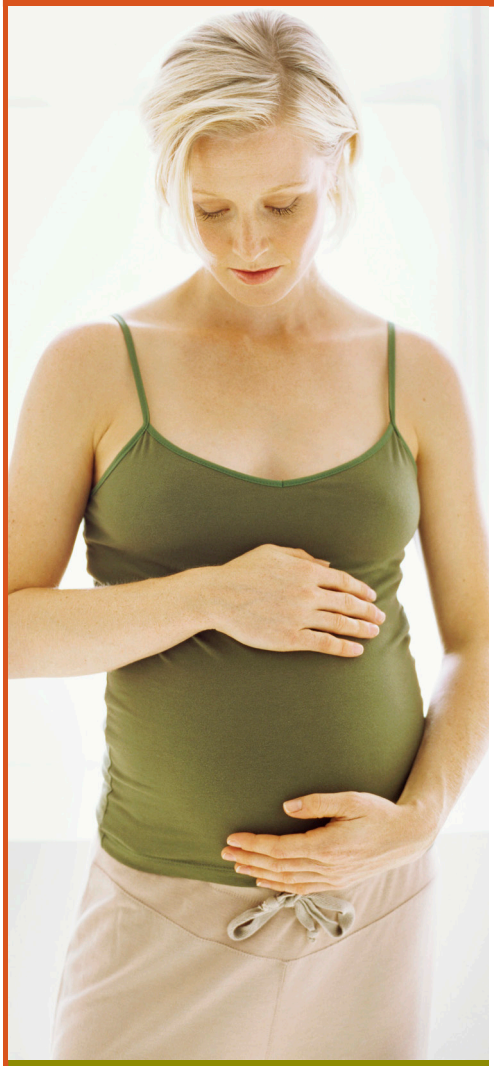
Ticks and Lyme Disease



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.

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Vector Borne Diseases | Bacterial Diseases Branch

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Facial paralysis.

Bull's eye rash on the back.

Arthritic knee.

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.

Protect yourself from future illness

- Use insect repellent that contains 20 - 30% DEET.
- Wear clothing that has been treated with permethrin.
- Take a shower as soon as you can after working outdoors.
- Look for ticks on your body. Ticks can hide under the armpits, behind the knees, in the hair, and in the groin.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.

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://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/9/1089.full
3. Lyme Disease in Pregnancy: Case Report and Review of the Literature.2006. Obstetrical & Gynecological Survey. Vol 62, No. 1, pp. 41-50.

The bite of a blacklegged tick can transmit the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

For more information please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-63548
Email: cdcinfo@cdc.gov Web: www.cdc.gov