Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria carried by ticks. Lyme disease is most common from spring through fall. Ticks are more active then and people are outside more.

**SYMPTOMS**

Symptoms of Lyme disease may start from 3 to 30 days after a tick bite. Many people with Lyme disease will have a red, slowly expanding, “bull’s eye” rash. Other symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Swollen glands in the neck
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches

Untreated infection may cause severe joint pain and swelling, shooting pains, numbness or tingling in the hands or feet and problems with short term memory.

**TREATMENT**

Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. Your doctor will treat you based on your symptoms and whether you could have been bitten by a tick. Lyme disease is not common in North Carolina, but if you have been in an area where Lyme disease is common (the Northeast or Midwest), let your doctor know. Your doctor may test you for Lyme disease. However, your doctor should treat you right away, even before the test results come in.

**HOW ITS SPREAD**

Ticks feed by attaching to the skin. They become infected by feeding on animals that have Lyme disease. Ticks spread the infection when they attach to other animals or people to feed. Lyme disease is not known to spread from person to person.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A TICK BITE**

- Take ticks off right away. Ticks must be attached for several hours to spread Lyme Disease.
- Make a note of the date of the bite on your calendar.
- Go to a health care provider if you start to have symptoms within the next month.

**HOW TO REMOVE A TICK**

1. Grab the tick firmly with tweezers.
2. Pull up with a steady motion.
3. Disinfect the skin and tweezers and wash hands.

Never squeeze or crush a tick. Infected material can be released. Do NOT use Vaseline, hot matches, nail polish or other products to remove ticks. These do NOT work.

**SOUTHERN TICK-ASSOCIATED RASH ILLNESS (STARI)**

Southern Tick-Associated Rash Illness (STARI) is another disease spread by ticks. This infection causes a rash that can look like Lyme and may cause fever. It is not clear whether STARI needs to be treated with antibiotics, but your doctor may prescribe them to be safe. People with STARI test negative for Lyme disease. STARI is found in the southeastern and the Atlantic coast states, including North Carolina.

**HOW TO PREVENT LYME DISEASE—READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE.**
Take ticks off right away! This is the most important thing you can do to keep from getting Lyme disease and the other illnesses ticks spread. Ticks are not likely to spread Lyme disease when attached to the skin less than 6-12 hours.

Ticks like areas with long grasses, underbrush, deep woods and leaf litter. To keep from getting tick bites:

- **Check yourself, your children and pets for ticks after being outside.** Taking a bath within two hours of coming inside is helpful.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET on skin (see below) and permethrin on clothing (follow product directions).
- Wear light colored clothing so you can see ticks.
- Wear long pants and shirts with long sleeves when in areas of high grass, brush, leaf litter and woods. Tuck pants into socks. Tuck shirts into pants.
- There are tick repellants especially made for pets. Treat pets that spend time outdoors for ticks. Follow product directions.
- Keep grass mowed. Remove leaf litter, brush and tall weeds from around your home and at the edge of the lawn. Create a tick barrier by mulching, putting in gravel or pavement (3 feet wide) or fencing between landscaped and natural areas.

### How to Use DEET Products Safely

Insect repellents that contain DEET work best to prevent tick bites. The amount of DEET in insect repellents ranges from 10% to over 30%. The higher the amount of DEET in a repellent, the longer it works. The chances of harmful effects from DEET insect repellents are low if used safely.

To use DEET safely:

- Don’t use on children under 2 months of age.
- Don’t use repellents on children that contain more than 30% DEET.
- Adults should put insect repellents on children.
- To put insect repellents on the face, spray on the hands first. Wipe the repellent from hands on to the face. Avoid the eyes, nose, mouth or ears.
- Use repellents only on exposed skin or on clothing (not under clothes). Do not use repellents on cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- Do not put spray repellents on in enclosed areas or near food.
- Don’t use sunscreens that have DEET in them. Put a sunscreen on first then put the repellent on top (if both are needed).
- Wash repellents off when they are no longer needed.

Stop using an insect repellent if you think you or your child is having a reaction to it. Wash the treated skin, and call the Poison Control Center (1-800-848-6946). Take the repellent with you if you go to the doctor.