

# LYME DISEASE PREVENTION GUIDELINES

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~ Dr. Sonya Nobbe, ND

In 2016, KFL&A Public Health reported that 32% of the ticks brought in for testing were positive for the infectious agent that causes Lyme disease. Only 23% of ticks tested positive 3 years prior. **We're in a Lyme-endemic region and the risk continues to rise each year.** Please educate yourself, friends, and family members about tick-bite prevention and treatment. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

1. Wear light-coloured clothing (to make ticks more visible), with pants tucked into socks when traveling in tall grasses and wooded areas.
2. A product containing 30% DEET is officially recommended for adults. For children younger than 12 years, Health Canada recommends using a product with 10% DEET. However, the repelling effects at this concentration may only last for 1 to 2 hours. Alternate approved chemicals for children or sensitive individuals include products with Icaridin (e.g. Avon Skin So Soft, some MEC and OFF! brand products).
3. **Non-approved** but well researched natural repellants include Lemon Eucalyptus oil (*Eucalyptus citriodora*), Labrador tea oil (*Rhododendron tomentosum*), Juniper (*Juniperus virginia*), and Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*). These can be mixed in a ratio of 12 parts pure grain alcohol (95% if available), to 1 part oil combination, and applied liberally with a dark glass spritzer bottle over clothing.
4. Do not apply sunscreen and insect repellent together. It reduces their effectiveness and/or can increase the skin's absorption of harmful chemicals. (Visit our website for information about safe sunscreens.)
5. Do tick checks every time you come in from outside. Be sure to check pets and children's toys (e.g. blankets). You may want to go over your clothes with a lint roller or take a shower to wash off unattached ticks.
6. If you find a tick attached to your skin, *gently* remove it *straight out* with a pair of tweezers, by the



## IMMUNE SYSTEM ADVANTAGE

Your best defense is *always* your immune system. A single-pronged strategy designed to kill the harmful microbe can result in relapse up to 35% of the time. Tick-borne microbial infections have perfected their survival strategies over millennia and they're very skilled at evading direct pharmaceutical approaches. It's up to our immune system to match the evolutionary pressure and maintain optimal balance.

Evaluating and treating your entire immune system and its relationship to other systems in your body, is where integrative medicine excels. Work with a knowledgeable health practitioner to identify where your immune system requires support for strength and balance.



- head and as close to the skin as possible **without squeezing or twisting its body**. (Do *not* try to kill the tick while it is attached to you.)
7. KFL&A public health no longer accepts ticks for testing. Dispose of the tick or consider sending it to Armin Labs in Germany for analysis.
8. Take a photo of the bite area to help you recall the location and date of the bite, should a rash or other symptom appear over the coming weeks.
9. Apply an antiseptic to the bite area, or Andrographis tincture. Then apply a bentonite clay paste to the area for 12 to 24 hours.

Bacteria and other microbes make up 90% of the cells in and on the human body. Each Lyme bacteria finds a unique ecosystem in its human host, which creates unique disease symptoms in each person.

### Q: When should I see my doctor for antibiotics?

Pharmaceutical antibiotics may be recommended after an engorged (full of blood) black-legged tick was attached for more than 24 hours, *and fewer than 72 hours have since passed*. Antibiotics may also be indicated in the weeks immediately following a tick bite if you develop a rash (generally expanding, *not* itchy and larger than 5 cm). In these cases, antibiotic treatment is often indicated even without testing.

### Q: What should I do when I'm done the antibiotics?

Many people have heard that a course of antibiotics is not enough to guarantee resolution of Lyme disease. Your Naturopathic Doctor may recommend following your antibiotic course *immediately* with a course of anti-microbial and immune-supportive botanicals, such as Astragalus, Eleutherococcus, Andrographis, and probiotics.

### Q: What if my doctor says that I don't need antibiotics?

Our public health guidelines are designed to address acute Lyme disease symptoms. However, ticks carry multiple infections, some of which are insensitive to doxycycline and which may be transmitted in fewer than 24 hours. **Treat every tick bite regardless of how long the tick was attached.** Pharmaceuticals aren't always necessary, but **immune-supportive approaches are *always* indicated.**

### Q: When should I get tested?

Get tested 6 weeks after a known engorged tick bite, or if you have persistent symptoms *months* after a summer flu regardless of whether you noticed a tick bite. Be aware that false negatives are common if you complete the test *less* than 4 weeks after the tick bite or if you took antibiotics. False *positives* are also possible! Additional international testing is available through your Naturopath, but even this can be inaccurate. **A diagnosis must be made clinically** (i.e. based on symptoms) and alternate testing may be useful to guide appropriate treatment.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### On our website:

#### [Lyme Disease Symptom Questionnaire](#)

Strategies to support your immune system

### Books:

Healing Lyme by Stephen Buhner

### Other internet resources:

[KFL&A Public Health, publichealthontario.ca](#)

[CanLyme.org](#)