

Follow-up Sheet

Individual bitten by a tick or diagnosed with Lyme disease

Date

First name

Last name

WHAT IS LYME DISEASE ?

Lyme disease is an infectious disease caused by different species of bacteria (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) transmitted to humans by black-legged ticks that carry the bacterium.

WHAT IS THE RISK OF CONTRACTING IT?

Of 100 people bitten by a black-legged tick in a high-risk area¹, 1 to 3 could develop the skin rash characteristic of the localized stage of the disease. The risk of developing the other manifestations of the disease is not known. In Québec, there are about 12 species of ticks. The one that bit you could be a species other than the black-legged one or may not have carried the bacterium.

1. Maps of the high-risk areas:
www.inspq.qc.ca/zoonoses/maladie-de-lyme



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE DISEASE?

Localized stage (sometimes called the early stage)

- Beginning of the infection at the bite site **before** the bacteria spread into the bloodstream.
- A skin rash (erythema migrans) is the main manifestation observed, but it is not always present or noticed.

Disseminated stage

- Spread of the bacteria from the bite site when the infection has not been detected and treated.
- Generally occurs a few weeks or even a few months after the bite.
- General symptoms as well as cutaneous, neurological, cardiac and articular manifestations can occur (sometimes simultaneously).

MY HEALTH PROFESSIONAL HAS TOLD ME TO WATCH FOR:

(Please check the manifestations to watch for)



Cutaneous manifestations

- A skin rash (single or multiple), which may expand
- Present for at least 48 hours
- Associated with little or no pain and itching

...for at least 3 months



General symptoms (after a tick bite)

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Fever and chills
- Muscle and joint pain
- Concentration and memory problems

...for at most 2 months after the bite



Neurological manifestations

- Facial palsy
- Localized numbness in a single limb
- Neck pain of unknown origin
- Intense headache
- Vision problem

...for at least 6 months



Cardiac manifestations

- Chest pain
- Palpitations
- Dizziness

...for at least 6 months



Articular manifestations

- Joint swelling (especially in the knee), generally with little pain

...for at least 1 year

! The manifestations, the severity of the symptoms and the speed of progression from one stage of the disease to the next can vary from person to person.

! Children and cognitively impaired individuals may have difficulty describing the symptoms of Lyme disease.

I WILL CONSULT A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IN THE FOLLOWING CASES:

- New manifestations suggestive of Lyme disease occur.
- My overall health at the start of treatment worsens.
- My initial symptoms do not improve or they occur again after the treatment.
- I get a new tick bite.

Info-Santé 811 and pharmacists are resources you can talk to about your symptoms at any time!

Health professional's signature: _____

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

INFORMATION ON CUTANEOUS MANIFESTATIONS

- **While on the lookout for cutaneous manifestations, pay close attention to the places where a tick can go unnoticed:**
 - The chest, the armpits, the groin, the back of the knee, the lower buttocks, the lower back, the scalp, behind the ears, the eyebrows, the navel and between the toes.
 - **If one or more rashes appear:**
 - Mark the contour, take a photo with a measuring device (e.g., a ruler) and observe the affected area for 24 to 48 hours.
 - Consult a health professional if you notice:
 - A rash that is expanding or that is more than 5 cm in diameter;
 - or**
 - One or more rashes less than 5 cm but that persist for more than 48 hours.
- ! These rashes do not always have a bull's-eye-like appearance!**

TREATMENT AND RELIEF OF SYMPTOMS

- Lyme disease is treated with an antibiotic. The duration of treatment depends on the clinical manifestations.
 - To relieve your symptoms, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
 - After starting antibiotics, some people may have a reaction to the treatment (a Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction), which can manifest as chills, fever and headaches.
 - If this happens to you, get rest and take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to relieve your symptoms.
- ! Do not stop taking the antibiotic treatment. If in doubt, seek a health professional attention.**
- As a general rule, people experience a full recovery after taking antibiotics, especially if they are treated early and for erythema migrans. It can take some time for the symptoms to disappear.
 - Some symptoms (e.g., fatigue, facial palsy and arthritis) may persist for weeks or even months after appropriate antibiotic therapy. This could have a significant impact on your quality of life.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF ANTIBIOTICS

- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rash
- Photosensitivity (doxycycline)
- Pain and inflammation at the injection site (if the antibiotic is administered intravenously)

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

- The inappropriate use of antibiotics (e.g., not adhering to the dosage or the duration of treatment) can increase bacterial resistance to these drugs. Consequently, this improper use can reduce the antibiotics' effectiveness the next time you need them.
- ! It is very important to follow the instructions for taking an antibiotic for the entire duration of your treatment.**

LABORATORY TESTS FOR LYME DISEASE

- The test results provide clinicians with additional information for making the diagnosis.
- The laboratory tests for Lyme disease are not indicated at the time of the bite or during the localized stage or for checking the effectiveness of antibiotic therapy.
- The laboratory tests performed via Quebec's health-care system meet Canadian and American public health agency standards.

TICK-BORNE INFECTIONS

- Lyme disease is not the only infection that can be transmitted by ticks.