

playing it safe

Safety and health tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance and safety specialists at Diversified Insurance Industries, Inc.

Get the Facts about Lyme Disease

Important Information for Outdoor Workers

Construction workers, landscapers, forestry employees, brush cleaners, land surveyors, farming workers, railroad employees, oil field workers, utility line employees and parks and wildlife management individuals may be at risk of contracting Lyme disease. Ticks carrying the disease are most prevalent in Northeast portions of the United States, some areas around the Great Lakes and in parts of California.

All About Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is a bacterium carried in the gut of certain ticks. When these infected insects attach to the human body (often in the armpits, groin, scalp, or other hairy parts of the body), they slowly feed and transmit the disease within 36 to 48 hours. Young ticks are especially abundant in certain parts of the country and are prevalent in late spring and early summer, although adult ticks can transmit the infection as well.

Signs and Symptoms

Although a majority of people with Lyme disease will develop a "bull's-eye" rash, 20 to 40 percent of people do not exhibit this symptom. Instead, they may

get flu-like symptoms (fever, lymph node swelling, neck stiffness, generalized fatigue, headaches, migrating joint aches or muscle aches).

A diagnosis of Lyme disease is based on tracking a history of known exposure and through the development of signs and symptoms. If you suspect that you may have contracted Lyme disease, a blood test can confirm your suspicions and antibiotics can treat the infection. If it is left untreated, the disease can result in arthritis, muscle pain, heart disease and brain and nerve disorders.

Preventing Lyme Disease

Here are some things you can do to reduce your risk of contracting the infection:

- Avoid tick habitats, which include brushy, overgrown, grassy and woody areas in the spring and early summer months.
- Remove leaves, tall grass and brush from work areas.
- Apply a chemical poisonous to ticks around your work area

that complies with all federal, state and local regulations and standards.

- Wear light-colored clothing to see ticks more easily.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and tuck your pants into your boots to make it more difficult for ticks to reach your skin.
- Wear shoes that cover your entire foot.
- Use tick repellent on your skin and permethrin on your clothing.
- Shower well and wash and dry your clothing at high temperatures after you have been working outside.



Once You Come Inside...

Do a careful body check looking for ticks. If you find any, remove them with a tweezers and then clean your skin with antiseptic. Watch the area for the next several days in case a rash develops and monitor your health in case you start to feel ill. If you do feel sick or notice a rash, seek medical attention immediately to test for Lyme disease.

This flyer is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice.