Frequently asked questions about:

Lyme Disease

• **What is Lyme disease?** Lyme disease is an inflammatory condition caused by the bite of an infected deer tick.

Deer Ticks

• **What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?** Lyme disease can cause inflammation (swelling) in many different body parts or systems; but it most commonly affects the joints and nervous system.

• **What does Lyme disease feel like?** Doctors usually consider Lyme disease to have 3 phases: early localized, early disseminated and late disease. Many people never show any early symptoms at all. However, in the early localized phase some people develop a rash at the area of tick bite.
This rash usually develops within one month of the infection & it may or may not be itchy or painful. Sometimes the rash looks like a bulls-eye (see below) with red rings and a white spot in the middle; but sometimes it is just red. Often, rash/bites are found in areas of the body that are warm & moist like the armpit, belt line, back of knees, etc.

Beyond the rash of this early localized disease, many people complain of flu-like symptoms: headache, muscle/joint aches or stiffness, fatigue, and sometimes fever.

Early disseminated disease can occur days to months after the tick bite. Many times people do not remember any tick bite & they may never have had any rash or early symptoms. Often, during this phase, people may complain of achy or swollen/red joints.

Late disease symptoms can happen months or even years after the tick bite. Symptoms vary from person to person but could involve the heart & nerves: dizziness, numbness, changes in coordination, drooping facial features, memory changes, chronic arthritis, flu symptoms, etc.
How do doctors diagnose Lyme disease? Generally, doctors diagnose Lyme disease after reviewing your health history, symptoms, etc & performing a physical exam. Your doctor may order blood tests, but these lab results only confirm the diagnosis. There are 2 different blood tests doctors use; however, both tests can provide false positive or unclear results.

What can be done for Lyme disease?

- Research has shown that Lyme disease can be treated successfully with antibiotics if detected & treated early.
- If you suspect a tick bite or have any symptoms, consult your doctor immediately for the fastest, most effective treatment.

Prevention is key!!

- Wear light colored clothing when outdoors
- Tuck your cuffs into socks
- Inspect your body carefully for ticks
- Use repellants for killing bugs/ticks
- CAUTION!!! High risk season: May through July but remember there is risk of tick bite ALL year long!
How do I remove a tick?

- Wash hands.
- Do not burn or use ANY substance on the tick.
- Do not grasp, squeeze or twist the body of the tick as this may spread infected body fluids.
- Using tweezers, grasp the tick mouthparts as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull tick straight out.
- Use antiseptic on skin.
- Wash hands thoroughly.

Always talk to your doctor for possible diagnosis, testing and treatment, especially if tick parts remain after removal.
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For more information:

www.aldf.com
(American Lyme Disease)

www.cdc.gov
(Centers for Disease Control)

www.acponline.org/lyme
(physicians Lyme disease site)

www.state.ma.us/dph
(MA dept of Public Health)

www.lymediseaseassociation.org
(Lyme disease association)

www.LymeDiseaseAudio.com
www.Columbia-Lyme.org

www.ILADS.org
(International lyme and associated diseases society)

www.labtestonline.org

www.lyme.org

www.LymeNet.org

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/lymedisease.com
(National institute for health)

www.tickinfo.com
(tick products)

Local support groups:

Burlington MA
Contact: Gloria #781-272-9786  Grandmaglo45@comcast.net

Worcester County, MA
Contact: Dawn #978-597-2726  dgipa@yahoo.com

Danvers, MA
Contact: Kay #978-468-6336  b10g7@comcast.net