

Lyme carditis -

When Borrelia infects the heart

*Lyme carditis
occurs in the
disseminated stage
of Lyme disease -
weeks or months
after the bite of an
infected tick*



Image by Freepik

Lyme carditis may occur alone or be a feature of multi-system disseminated disease (e.g. alongside neuroborreliosis).

The diagnosis is clinical, based on the overall picture. An inquisitive approach and understanding that there are diverse presentations is required.

While testing for Lyme antibodies can be helpful if positive, **a negative test does not rule out disease** (*Borrelia* is immune evasive).

Cardiac presentations include

- Arrhythmias (including AF, heart block)
- Pericarditis
- Myocarditis
- Sudden death

Symptoms may include

- Chest pain (may be severe and unrelenting)
- Breathlessness
- Palpitations
- Collapse
- Profound fatigue

If a cardiac presentation behaves unexpectedly (e.g. a presumed viral pericarditis not resolving within 3-7 days of colchicine; new arrhythmia in an otherwise young, active person), use this as an opportunity to reconsider and review the initial assumed aetiology and differentials – ***could this be Lyme disease?***

History (may need to be actively sought):

- Tick bite or potential tick exposure in previous 1-6 months, (ticks exist in rural & urban green spaces)
- History or presence of erythema migrans rash - most commonly uniform, expanding, erythematous rash, may have bull's eye appearance. May be multiple, or visible only after hot shower
- Systemic symptoms - fatigue, malaise, neck pain, loss of appetite, weight loss
- Other multi systemic symptoms

For treatment, see NICE guideline NG95 - Lyme disease; IV antibiotics may be required.

See reverse for links to further information.

Lyme Disease -

Information Sources for Health Professionals

A charity with a mission to minimise risk of Lyme disease whilst enjoying the outdoors, by educating the public and health professionals about ticks and Lyme disease



www.lymeresourcecentre.com



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**NICE guideline 95 –
Lyme disease**



**RCGP Lyme disease
toolkit**



**NICE Clinical
Knowledge Summary
Lyme disease**



**BMJ Visual summary
– Lyme disease:
Antibiotic choices**



**CDC – Lyme
disease rashes**



**Lyme disease – What
Health Professionals
Need to Know**



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Lyme Disease - What Health Professionals Need to Know

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