

# Lyme Disease – Quick Key Facts for Health Professionals

- Lyme disease (LD) is an infection caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, passed to humans via bite of an infected tick
- Ticks are tiny & their bites are painless, so can easily go unnoticed
- Insect repellent can help prevent tick bites
- Attached ticks should be carefully removed as soon as possible - ideally using a tick removal tool
- Early diagnosis & treatment gives best chance of cure.
- *Erythema migrans* (EM) rash is diagnostic of Lyme disease (LD) BUT
  - is absent in 30% of cases
  - bull's eye appearance occurs in about a third of cases
  - is more typically a uniform expanding rash
- Testing is not required if EM rash is present. Diagnose and treat as [NICE Lyme disease guideline \(NG95\)](#)
- Erythema migrans can be easily misdiagnosed as another insect bite or allergy
- Diagnosis of Lyme disease should be based on history and clinical symptoms +/- Lyme disease serology
- A negative blood test does not exclude LD diagnosis
- Symptoms in the early or late disseminated LD stages may be multisystemic and mimic other conditions
- 10-20 % of patients report significant ongoing symptoms after standard treatment
- The [NICE Lyme disease guideline \(NG95\)](#) provides advice on diagnosis and treatment
- The [RCGP Lyme disease toolkit](#) provides links to a range of evidence based information
- Raising awareness with general public will enable early recognition of signs and symptoms of Lyme disease, so that appropriate, timely medical intervention can be provided



[NICE  
Guideline 95](#)



[RCGP Lyme  
Disease Toolkit](#)



[Lyme Resource  
Centre website](#)



# The Many Forms of Lyme Disease Rashes (Erythema Migrans)

Faint colors and borders



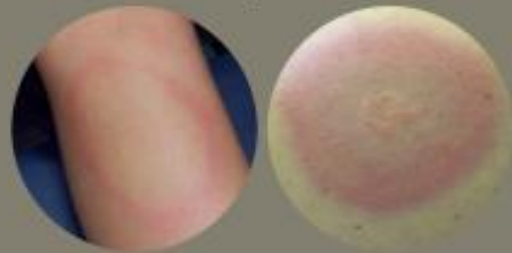
Crusted centers



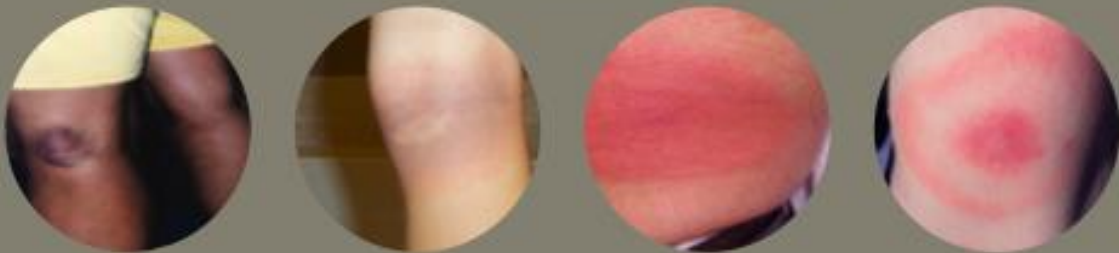
More than one rash



Different shapes and colors



Appearing anywhere on the body



Most people with Lyme disease develop an erythema migrans rash at the site of the tick bite. The rash usually expands slowly over several days reaching up to 12 inches or more (30 cm) across. **However, not all rashes are a sign of Lyme disease.** The redness in the picture to the left is caused by irritation to the tick bite — not a tickborne infection.