

# Lyme Disease

***Lyme disease is spread by the bite of an infected tick. Signs and symptoms may vary, depending on how recently the bite occurred. If the infection is left untreated, it can spread to the joints, heart, and nervous system. Workers can be at risk when they perform work outdoors.***

## Sean's Story

A group of electric utility workers was laying lines for development of a new office park. One worker, Sean, had been working very close to bushes. That night, he noticed a small red bump on his arm. A few days later he noticed that it had changed into a rash with larger, red bull's-eye-like bumps. Sean went to the doctor, and was diagnosed with Lyme disease. Fortunately, because it was discovered early, the disease could be treated with antibiotics.

- ✘ **Have you ever known anyone who has been bitten by a tick while working? How could this incident have been avoided?**
- ✘ **What could have been done to prevent the tick bite?**

## Remember This

- Be aware that deer ticks are found in brush, woods, tall grass, and leaf litter and are active in warm months. They are very tiny. Most would fit on the head of a pin.

To protect yourself:

- Wear a hat, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. Put your pant cuffs inside your work boots. Tuck in your shirt. Light-colored clothing may make it easier to spot ticks.
- Use insect repellents containing 20%-30% DEET on your skin and clothing. Use insecticides such as permethrin for greater protection. Permethrin kills ticks on contact and can be used on clothing and gear, but it should not be used on skin.
- Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day. Remember to check your hair, underarms, and groin. Immediately remove ticks from your body with fine-tipped tweezers.
- Wash and dry work clothes in a hot dryer to kill any remaining ticks.
- See a doctor right away if you have symptoms of Lyme disease (red, bull's-eye rash; fever; joint and muscle pain; headache; chills; fatigue; swollen lymph nodes).

## How can we stay safe today?

What will we do at the worksite to prevent Lyme disease?

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OSHA Regulation: 1926.51

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- ✘ Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- ✘ Use an insect repellent on skin and clothes, and use permethrin on clothes and gear.
- ✘ If you develop symptoms, see a doctor.