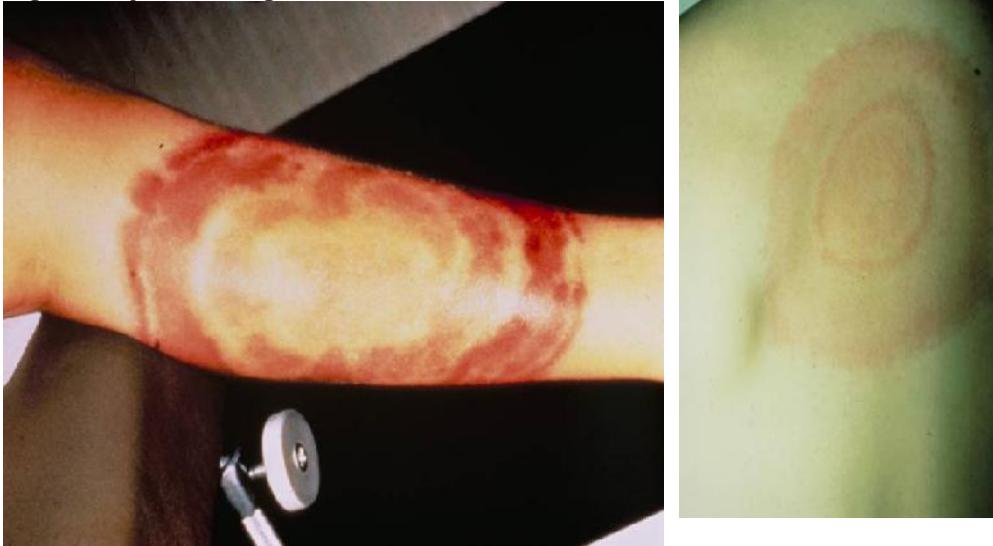


What are the Symptoms?

The Lyme disease bacterium can infect several parts of the body, producing different symptoms at different times. Not all patients with Lyme disease will have all symptoms, and many of the symptoms can occur with other diseases as well. If you believe you may have Lyme disease, it is important that you consult your health care provider for proper diagnosis.

Early symptoms of LD appear 3 to 32 days after the bite of an infected tick which was attached for at least 24 hours.

Figure: Erythema migrans



Most people with LD will get a rash called “erythema migrans” where they were bitten. The rash starts as a small red round area, which usually gets bigger and can reach two or more inches across. The center of the rash may clear giving a “bull’s eye” appearance.

Other symptoms during the early stage of LD include:

- Chills
- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Stiff neck
- Joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Rash that spreads to other parts of the body

Early LD is usually curable using antibiotics that your health care provider can prescribe. Without treatment, the disease may progress to arthritis, meningitis, facial nerve paralysis, or hearing abnormalities. The later symptoms may occur

in people who did not recognize early symptoms. Swelling and joint pain may recur over many years.

Untreated, the infection may spread to other parts of the body within a few days to weeks, producing an array of discrete symptoms. These include loss of muscle tone on one or both sides of the face (called facial or "Bell's palsy), severe headaches and neck stiffness due to meningitis, shooting pains that may interfere with sleep, heart palpitations and dizziness due to changes in heartbeat, and pain that moves from joint to joint. Many of these symptoms will resolve, even without treatment.

After several months, approximately 60% of patients with untreated infection will begin to have intermittent bouts of arthritis, with severe joint pain and swelling. Large joints are most often affected, particularly the knees. In addition, up to 5% of untreated patients may develop chronic neurological complaints months to years after infection. These include shooting pains, numbness or tingling in the hands or feet, and problems with concentration and short term memory.