

# LYME DISEASE

Does my dog need to be vaccinated?

Answers to frequently asked questions  
about canine Lyme disease.





## What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks to dogs, as well as to other animals and people. Most Lyme disease in the United States is spread by the deer tick (pictured below), which is found primarily in the Northeast, Southeast, and upper Midwest. The western black-legged tick is the primary cause of Lyme disease transmission in the western states.

### (The deer tick)

No larger than the head of a pin, the ticks responsible for transmitting Lyme disease are smaller than most other ticks found on dogs.



## What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

While many dogs will not show any outward signs of illness, the most common visible symptoms of Lyme disease are arthritis and lameness due to painful joints. Dogs may also experience fever, loss of appetite, and loss of energy. Symptoms—when they do appear—may come and go, vary in severity, and can sometimes be mistaken for those of other conditions. Generally speaking, puppies are more likely to exhibit symptoms than adult dogs.

arthritis  
lameness  
fever  
appetite loss  
energy loss



# LYME

## How serious is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease can become quite serious if left untreated. In the most severe cases, Lyme disease can lead to heart disease, central nervous system disorders, or even fatal kidney disease.

## How is Lyme disease diagnosed?

Your veterinarian will typically diagnose your dog based on recognition of Lyme disease symptoms, then confirm it with a simple blood test. If the disease is in its early stages, however, the blood test may be negative. Only with later disease does the test become reliably positive.



## What's in a name?

The medical term for Lyme disease is *borreliosis*, named for the *Borrelia* bacteria that cause the infection. The more commonly known name comes from the town of Lyme, Connecticut, where the disease was first identified in 1975 as the cause of a mysterious outbreak of arthritis in adults and children. The first report of Lyme disease in dogs occurred in 1984.



## Is my dog at risk for infection?

Any dog can be infected with Lyme disease, but dogs living in or traveling to areas where Lyme is prevalent have a higher risk for infection. Though it has been traditionally associated with the northeastern United States, 22 states have reported a high prevalence of canine Lyme disease, with another 8 states reporting a moderately high prevalence of positive canine cases. If you live in, or will be traveling to, one of these states with your dog, Lyme vaccination may be beneficial. Be aware that, if your dog is an outdoor pet or a hunting companion in one of these areas, the risk of exposure to Lyme disease is even greater.

## What can be done if my dog becomes infected?

The standard treatment for Lyme disease in dogs is 4 weeks of therapy with an antibiotic. Dogs usually begin to respond within 2 to 3 days when the disease is caught in its earliest stages. In some cases, however, symptoms do return, so further treatment may be required. For this reason...

**prevention**  
is the best way to manage  
**LYME DISEASE**

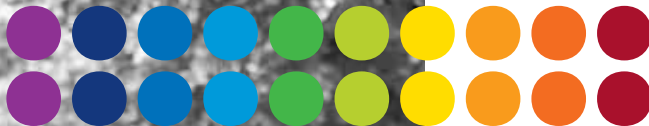
## LYME country

Prevalence of canine Lyme disease goes far beyond the Northeast, with positive cases reported across the US

**22** states with high prevalence

**8** states with moderately high prevalence

Only **1** state in the continental US does not border another with high or moderately high Lyme prevalence



## How can I protect my dog from Lyme disease?

There are two ways to protect your dog from Lyme disease; the first is to stop the tick, and the second is to stop the disease-causing bacteria.

### 1 Stop the tick

To protect your dog from ticks, use a tick repellent collar or ask your veterinarian about medications that can help keep ticks off your dog. Also, be sure to check your dog for ticks after a day spent outdoors; remove any ticks you find promptly. These measures can help but are not always 100% effective. For that reason, you should consider a second line of defense—vaccination.

### 2 Stop the bacteria

To protect your dog from the bacteria that cause Lyme disease, your pet must receive a Lyme vaccination before it is bitten by an infected tick.

If your dog is at risk, it is recommended that you employ all of these preventive measures: get your pet vaccinated for Lyme, use tick repellents, check your dog every day for ticks, and remove ticks promptly.





## Is Lyme vaccination safe?

Dogs have been vaccinated for Lyme disease since 1990, and side effects have been rare. When they occur, they are usually mild and typically resolve within a few days. Sometimes dogs will get a small, tender swelling at the injection site, which usually goes away very quickly.

## Where can I learn more about Lyme disease?

Ask your veterinarian if you have further questions about Lyme disease and explore these websites for further information:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9d1MPHInXA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9d1MPHInXA)

[www.cdc.gov/lyme](https://www.cdc.gov/lyme)

# Assessing your dog's risk of being infected with Lyme

## Does my dog really need to be vaccinated against Lyme disease?

Take this survey to assess your dog's risk of Lyme disease. Check either **YES** or **NO**.

- 1 Does your dog live in one of the 30 states with a moderately high to high prevalence of canine Lyme disease?  
(ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV, NC, GA, FL, OH, IN, MI, IL, WI, MN, ND, IA, TX, OK, CO, AZ, CA, OR)

YES  NO
- 2 Have you taken, or are you planning to take, a trip with your dog to one of these states?

YES  NO
- 3 Do you ever take your dog on hunting trips or other outdoor activities?

YES  NO
- 4 Does your dog spend a lot of time outdoors?

YES  NO
- 5 Has anyone from your local area been diagnosed with Lyme disease?

YES  NO



## Share your answers with your vet.

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, it is likely that your dog would benefit from Lyme vaccination.

# 5 ways to help protect your dog from Lyme disease

- 1 Get your dog a tick collar or ask your veterinarian to recommend other tick-prevention measures.
- 2 After a trip outdoors, check your dog for ticks. Remove any immediately.
- 3 Be aware of any changes in your dog's behavior. Watch for signs of Lyme disease such as limping, fever, lack of energy, or loss of appetite.
- 4 Have your veterinarian screen for ticks at your dog's next visit.
- 5 Make sure your dog **is vaccinated for Lyme disease.**



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MAH-VC-269a  
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