



COURSE: INFORMATION/ASSESSMENT FOR LYME DISEASE (BORRELIA)

David Weston, Retired Secretary of Enmore Park GC, provides information about the risks of Lyme Disease.

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Lyme disease is an infection that derives from a tick bite. The disease has a variety of symptoms, including changes affecting the skin, heart, joints and nervous system.

It is caused by an infection from a micro-organism itself transmitted by a bite from the wood tick, a blood-sucking parasite which normally lives on deer.

The wood tick is found in many areas, particularly in forests where deer are common. A tick will settle anywhere on a human body, but prefers warm, moist and dark places like the crotch or armpits.

When the tick has found a suitable place on the body, it sticks in its probe to draw up blood, exposing the host to the risk of infection.

Initial Symptoms:

- red spot around the location of the tick's bite. The spot will gradually grow bigger, often with a pale area in the middle. This symptom is called erythema migrans.
- Erythema migrans can also appear at other places on the body where the tick has not bitten. Some people get many red spots.
- Usually one to four weeks will pass between the bite and when erythema migrans appears.

Some patients with Lyme disease feel like they have caught influenza - the symptoms may be:

- drowsiness
- headaches
- mild fever
- joint and muscle pains
- swollen lymph glands.

Secondary Symptoms:

The symptoms often begin with back pain, typically between the shoulder blades and in the neck like a slipped disc. The pain worsens at night.

Distorted feelings around the area of the bite. The nerves become numb, especially in the face. This may occur at any time up to four weeks after the pain began.

Sometimes neuro borrelia may present itself as **meningitis**, with fever, headache and stiffness in the neck.

In rare cases, the disease may become chronic, with a slowly developing destruction of the nervous system, numbing, partial hearing impairment and the development of **dementia**.

Neuro borrelia demands immediate treatment, usually with an admission to hospital.

Deer are not resident on the course but are occasional migrants.

Risk Reduction

When working in woodland areas tuck trousers into socks and wear sleeves with elasticated wrists to reduce exposed flesh areas.

Should you discover a tick on your body, do not squash it, remove it carefully with tweezers and retain it for examination purposes.

The Risk is Low

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