

Lyme Disease 101

1. **We DO have Lyme in Oregon.** New CDC data shows that Hood River county is highly endemic for Lyme disease, which means that the type of ticks that carry Lyme have been reported in this county, as well as several other counties in Oregon.
2. **Everyone with Lyme does NOT get a bulls-eye rash.** Fewer than 20% of Lyme patients on the west coast EVER notice any kind of rash. Rashes that are noticed appear as a bulls-eye or in many other forms that can often be mistaken for ringworm, eczema, poison-oak, psoriasis, etc.
3. **Lyme is easy to get and hard to cure unless treated early.** Lyme has been reported nationwide, and unless treated quickly, the bacteria can invade every kind of cell in your body – teeth, bones, eyes, brain, heart, muscles, and organs. Left untreated, it can cause permanent damage. Those suffering from late-stage Lyme disease have shown continuing improvement with long term doses of antibiotics.
4. **Lyme ticks travel in many ways.** Robins are the most common carriers of Lyme infected ticks. Deer, mice, deer, rats, squirrels, birds and raccoons are also carriers. Lyme ticks have even been found on commercial jet airlines within the last year, so people are carriers too.

What to do if you get a tick bite

1. **Remove the tick with tweezers by pulling straight out and save it.** Do NOT squeeze, use oil, a match or your fingers to remove it. If you can't remove it completely, go to the emergency room ASAP.
2. **Send the tick in for testing.** www.igenex.com is the west coast lab for this. It's much easier to test the tick than it is to test a person since people vary in their ability to produce antibodies. An infected person may take weeks, months or even never test positive - tests catch only about 50% of the cases.
3. **See a Lyme literate doctor** if the tick is embedded for more than just a couple hours. Joan Laurance is the most Lyme literate Gorge physician 541.386-4844. Many other local doctors don't think we have Lyme and don't how serious, and even deadly, Lyme can be if left untreated
4. **4-6 weeks of doxycycline** should kill the Lyme bacteria and remove the risk of getting Lyme disease.
5. **CDC says that Lyme is a clinical diagnosis** and that tests may provide evidence to support a diagnosis which is the best reason to see an expert Lyme doctor

References for this information can be found on www.lymedisease.org

More questions? Contact the local Lyme support group leader, Pam Ritzenthaler, 541.386.5658 or visit the meetings, the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm in the Cascade Acupuncture Center.