



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is a serious but highly treatable illness. If you suspect you have contracted it, it's important to see a doctor right away. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate the condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i>	The bacterium that causes Lyme disease. The bacteria are carried by some breeds of ticks that live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, or North-Central United States.
Erythema Migrans	A distinctive rash associated with many cases of Lyme disease. It's a circular rash that sometimes resembles a target, especially when it's well-developed. It's often itchy and can be painful and may feel warm to the touch. It can linger for a couple of weeks and grow to a size of 7 to 14 inches. In rare cases, a person with Lyme may develop multiple erythema migrans rashes.
Meningitis	A possible complication of Lyme disease, meningitis is characterized by a stiff neck and severe headache.
Bell's Palsy	Also a possible complication, Bell's palsy is a temporary paralysis in the facial muscles that makes one side of the face droop.
Lyme Carditis	Rarely—in just about 1 percent of cases—Lyme leads to a heart condition called Lyme carditis, which can cause dizziness, shortness of breath, and irregular heartbeat. If properly treated, the condition generally resolves in a few days or weeks.
Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) Test	A blood test that can identify the antibodies your body makes to fight off the <i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i> bacteria. A positive result doesn't mean you definitely have Lyme disease, though.
Western Blot	If you have a positive EIA test, your doctor will likely perform a test that's more specific for Lyme, called the Western blot. This test detects the presence and amount of specific protein molecules. Both the EIA and Western blot must be positive to support a diagnosis of Lyme disease.

