THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LYME DISEASE

What is Lyme disease?
- An infection caused by a bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*.
- Human infection occurs through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (deer ticks).
- A tick must be attached for at least 24 hours before it can transmit the bacteria.
- If untreated, the bacteria can travel through the bloodstream and cause widespread infection.

How can it be prevented?
- Use insect repellent containing diethyltoluamide (DEET), or spray clothing with a tick-killing spray containing permethrin.
- Wear protective clothing and shoes that cover the entire foot.
- Avoid grassy, brushy, and wooded areas, especially in May, June, and July.
- Upon returning from tick-infested areas, conduct a full-body tick check and examine gear and pets for ticks.
- Remove any ticks promptly.
- Bathe within 2 hours of tick exposure.

What are the signs and symptoms?
- Expanding circular rash that may look like a bull’s eye (erythema migrans).
- Fever, chills, fatigue, headaches.
- Heart palpitations and dizziness.
- Painful joint and aching muscles.
- Loss of muscle tone on one or both sides of the face (Bell palsy)
- How is it diagnosed?
- Visit your doctor if you develop illness within a few weeks of being bitten by a tick.
- Visit your doctor if you develop an expanding rash at the site of a tick bite.
- Be aware that many people with Lyme disease never see a tick on their body.
- Your doctor will conduct a careful physical examination and ask questions about potential tick exposure.
- A blood test can check for antibodies to the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.
- Other tests may be needed if the disease is more widespread.

How is it treated?
- In most cases, Lyme disease can be cured with a few weeks of antibiotics.
- Symptoms may persist or recur if diagnosis and treatment are delayed.
- Once treated, lingering symptoms usually subside with time.