

Lyme Disease Cases in Clark County

General Lyme Disease Information

Background

Lyme disease is caused by a cork-screwed shaped bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and it is transmitted by the blacklegged tick (formerly the deer tick). This bacterium is found in mice, squirrels, and small mammals without causing illness. Lyme disease affects both dogs and humans.

Transmission & Risk

Those who people time outdoors in tick-infested environments have an increased risk of exposure. May through August have the most cases being reported due to an exposure of ticks or woodland/brush habitats; however, cases are likely in every month of the year.

Lyme disease is acquired by the bite of an infected tick, most cases are caused by nymphs (immature ticks). Nymphs are very small and may go unnoticed even when biting, the tick must be attached for 24 hours or more for the bacterium to be passed. No direct transmission occurs from person to person or from dog to person.

Symptoms & Complications

Lyme disease usually occurs during the summer months and starts as a circular reddish rash around or near the tick bite. It can take several days to several weeks for the rash to expand, 70-80% of cases will have a rash. ~15% of cases will develop multiple skin lesions. Other symptoms that can occur involve: fever, headache, fatigue, stiff neck, joint and muscle pain.

If left untreated, meningitis, facial paralysis or heart abnormalities may develop. Swelling and pain in major joints can recur over several months or years.

Testing, Diagnosis, Treatment

A physician diagnosis is necessary to identify Lyme disease, based on clinical symptoms, exposure history and blood test results. Previous infection of Lyme disease does not prevent re-infection, an individual can be infected more than once.

More information can be found here: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-lyme-disease>

Clark County Related Discussion

Figure 1 shows the Lyme Disease cases in Clark County from 2017 to 2021. A majority of these cases are suspected (Table 1). A suspected case is when there is no known exposure and no laboratory evidence of infection; **OR** a case with laboratory evidence of infection but no clinical information available.

When traveling in areas where ticks may be present, individuals should take the necessary precautions (listed in the link above, pages 7-8) to reduce the risk of acquiring a tick-borne disease as well understand the proper tick removal techniques. There has been a 35.7% decrease in cases from 2020 (14 cases) to 2021 (9 cases).

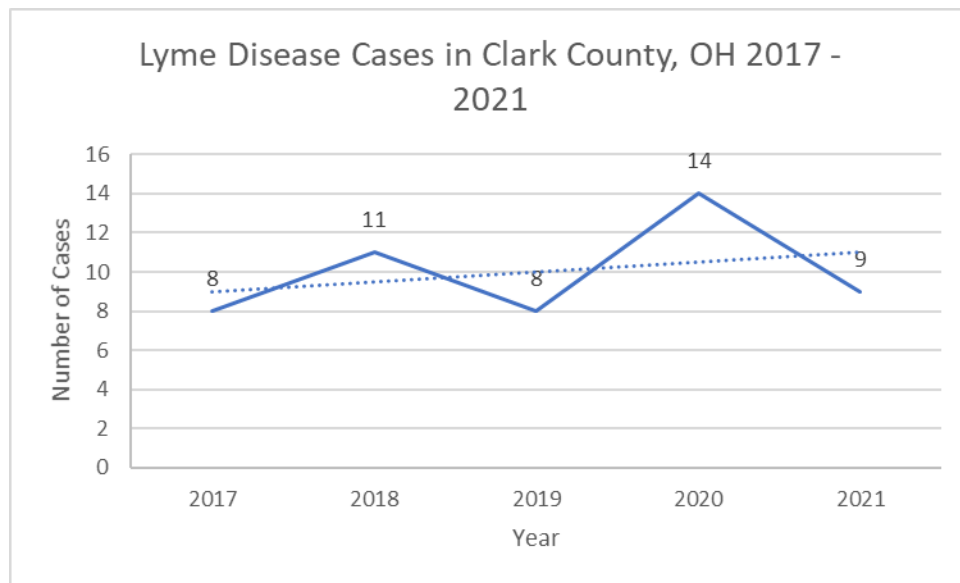


Figure 1 Lyme Disease cases in Clark County, 2017-2021

	Suspected Total	Probable Total	Confirmed Total
2017	8	0	0
2018	9	0	2
2019	8	0	0
2020	11	1	2
2021	6	0	3

Table 1 Lyme Disease Case Classification, 2017-2021