

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR TICK BITES IN A LYME BORRELIOSIS ENDEMIC AREA

F. Strle

ABSTRACT

Ticks transmit causative agents of several diseases; however, the most common disease in many parts of the northern hemisphere is Lyme Borreliosis. An active search for possibly attached ticks (after potential exposure to an appropriate environment) is quite important for preventing the disease because it enables early detachment.

Recommended procedures after a tick bite in a Lyme Borreliosis endemic region include early removal of the attached tick, disinfection of the site of the tick bite, the policy of wait and watch for the possible appearance of Lyme Borreliosis manifestation(s) and advice on early treatment of the possible signs or symptoms of Lyme Borreliosis.

The effectiveness of antibiotics for preventing Lyme Borreliosis has not been unequivocally proven. Even if it was determined, several questions concerning the rationality of such preventive usage of antibiotics remain to be answered.

KEY WORDS

Lyme Borreliosis, prevention, procedures after tick bites, removal of an attached tick, preventive usage of antibiotics

INTRODUCTION

Ticks transmit causative agents of several diseases; however, the most common human illness in many parts of the northern hemisphere is Lyme Borreliosis (LB) (1,2).

Its clinical course is difficult to predict and when the illness assumes a chronic form, it can notably deteriorate the patient's quality of life. The risk of late sequelae is reduced, though not completely eliminated, by initiating proper therapy in early

stages of the disease (3). At present, most efforts are directed to the prevention of infection by effective immunization and to non-specific protective measures.

In the recent years, people have been increasingly afraid of being exposed to a tick and the associated risk of *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb) infection and some individuals even panic when bitten by a tick. Thus, it is important to have simple and precise advice on what can be done and what should be done following a tick bite.

