

NAPA-SOLANO-YOLO-MARIN COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
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TICK TESTING FOR LYME DISEASE

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This fluorescent antibody test is specific for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (*B. burgdorferi*), the causative agent of Lyme disease.

A POSITIVE result for this test indicates that the tick carried the Lyme disease bacteria, *B. burgdorferi*. It does NOT necessarily mean that the bitten person is infected by the bacteria. Studies have shown that, among other factors, the possibility of infection with *B. burgdorferi* increases with the amount of time the tick is feeding on the person, or if the tick was smashed on removal or mouth parts were left under the skin. The development of Lyme disease in humans after a tick bite depends on many factors. Some bitten persons never develop the disease. Others get a rash and nothing more. And some persons go on to have very serious and chronic problems. A person bitten by a tick carrying *B. burgdorferi* should always consult with their physician.

A NEGATIVE result for *B. burgdorferi*, on the other hand, indicates that this particular tick did not harbor the Lyme disease organism, within the limits of sensitivity of the direct fluorescent antibody test. It does not mean that the person is not infected with *B. burgdorferi*. The person may have been bitten by more than the one tick that was brought in for examination, or may have been bitten at another time.