

Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a spirochete (say "SPY-ROH-KEET") that humans can get from the bite of an infected deer tick. The spirochete's scientific name is *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Lyme disease is called "The Great Imitator" because its symptoms mimic many other diseases. It can affect any organ of the body, including the brain and nervous system, muscles and joints, and the heart.

Scientists recognize more than a dozen tickborne diseases in the United States and new ones are still being discovered. One tick may carry more than one disease, so sometimes people get more than one co-infection from the bite of a single tick.

Lyme disease has been found on every continent except Antarctica. It is found all across the United States. It seems to be spreading.



An average Deer Tick lives for two years and can survive in very cold climates. Although infection rates drop in the winter – it's still possible to contract Lyme.

Not all ticks are infected. Within endemic areas, there is considerable

variation locally, depending on type of habitat, presence of wildlife, and other factors. People usually get Lyme disease from ticks infected with Lyme spirochetes. of a poppy seed. Because their bite is painless, many people do not realize they have been bitten.

Symptoms

Early in the infection, many people experience a flu-like illness that may clear up without treatment. Some people get a rash around the site of the tick bite. Most of the time the rash is an ordinary red area, however if it is a bull's-eye shape with a darker edge, it is a definite sign of Lyme disease and needs immediate treatment.

There are over 100 different symptoms of Lyme disease, so it's hard to detect, and even harder to properly diagnose and treat. Sadly, it's not uncommon for patients to be told



that their symptoms are "all in their head", or to be treated for the wrong disease. Lyme disease initially affects everyone differently, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. However, as time passes the disease becomes more debilitating. Symptoms may come and go in varying degrees, with fluctuation from one symptom to another. Some victims experience a period that feels like remission, only to be followed by another onset of symptoms. The longer Lyme disease goes untreated, the harder it is to fight. Undiagnosed Lyme disease will affect a patient over the course of their entire lifetime

Early symptoms may include fever, headache, fatigue, depression, and a characteristic circular skin rash called erythema migrans (EM). If Lyme disease is not diagnosed and treated early, the Lyme spirochetes can spread and may go into hiding in your body. Weeks, months or even years later you may have problems with your brain and nervous

system, muscles and joints, heart and circulation, digestion, reproductive system, and skin. Symptoms may disappear even without treatment and different symptoms may appear at different times.

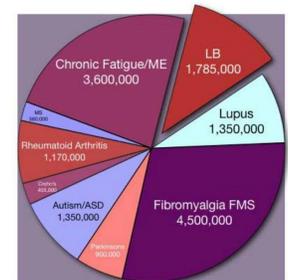
Testing

Diagnosing Lyme disease is extremely challenging. Lyme victims are commonly misdiagnosed with other illnesses, and, when a proper diagnosis is made, it's often difficult to verify because accurate testing isn't available. There are two common antibody tests for Lyme: ELISA and

Western blot test. Most times patients may test negative when they actually have been infected. Hundreds of thousands of sick, disabled and dying people are intentionally being denied proper testing, diagnoses and

treatment. Lyme disease treatment guidelines stand in the way of proper treatment and diagnoses. There are various amounts of advocates desperately spreading awareness and making it possible to make the necessary changes to one day find a cure.

Wont you be a Change Maker/ Hope Spreader?



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Website: www.worldlymeday.com
Email: worldlymeday@gmail.com