

Overview of Lyme Disease and Chronic Infections

"Lyme Disease" and other associated infections are most commonly associated with tick bites. Lyme Disease, in particular, is associated with a bacteria called borrelia. Although Lyme Disease also can refer to other associated co-infections. The same tick that carries the borrelia bacteria that causes Lyme Disease, can also transmit Babesia, Ehrlichia, *Bartonella*, Rocky Mountain Spotted fever (*Rickettsia*), and other disease causing pathogens. Research has shown that in addition to being transmitted by blood sucking insects, Lyme disease can also be transmitted sexually, can cross the placenta to the fetus, and may also be in breast milk.

Lyme borrelia are capable of avoiding your body's immune system, mutating into different forms, and even becoming dormant for long periods of time, only to activate as the result of an unrelated illness, injury, or traumatic event. Because of this, Lyme symptoms can develop days or months after initial infection. At different stages of the disease, these symptoms can mimic other diseases such as arthritis, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, autism, depression, MS, ALS, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and others.

Lyme disease is a clinical diagnosis. This means that the physician makes the diagnosis using your clinical history and symptoms. If the patient or physician observes a rash (Erythema Migrans rash), a diagnosis of Lyme disease will be made. If a rash is not seen, laboratory tests may be helpful to confirm a diagnosis. Not everyone who contracts Lyme disease gets a rash. Some report that only about half of Lyme sufferers recall having a rash.

Several laboratory tests are available, although none are 100% accurate. Many of the lab tests are based on your body's antibody production against the infection. Because of the nature of the Lyme borrelia, your body's antibody production will vary over time. This means you can test negative and still have Lyme disease.

Lyme Disease is a complex illness potentially complicated by multiple co-infections. If not treated early and effectively, it can become chronic and result in many complications that can damage virtually any body system. To recover, all of these issues must be addressed in a thorough and systematic manner. No single treatment or medication will result in full recovery of the more ill patient. Only by understanding the patient's condition and designing treatments and solutions for all of them will we be able to restore health to our patients.

Additional Information:

What to do if you've been bit by a tick

http://www.lymedisease.org/lyme101/lyme_disease/lyme_todo.html

Lyme Disease Basics

http://www.ilads.org/lyme_disease/about_lyme.html

Symptoms of Lyme Disease

http://columbia-lyme.org/patients/ld_lyme_symptoms.html

Detailed Symptom List

<http://www.lymediseaseassociation.org/SymptomList.doc>

Symptoms of Kid's with Lyme Disease

http://www.lymedisease.org/lyme101/lyme_disease/children_symptoms.html

The following list of symptoms is not meant to be a diagnostic tool. Lyme Disease can be associated with a complex set of symptoms which can change with time. However, in general, the more of these symptoms you have chronically over time, the more likely Lyme could be at the root of these symptoms.

Fatigue

Fevers

Weight Loss or Gain

Hearing: Loss, Buzzing or Ringing

Ear Pain

Dizziness, Vertigo

Off Balance, Unsteady

Lightheadedness

Sound Sensitivity

Insomnia

Excessive Sleep, Night/Day

Hair Loss

Cold Intolerance

Heat Intolerance

Headaches

Muscle Cramps

Night Sweats

Vivid Dreams

Nightmares

Constipation

Diarrhea

Chronic Cough

Joint Pain: Fingers, Toes

Joint Pain: Knees, Elbows

Joint Pain: Hips, Shoulders

Joint Swelling: Fingers, Toes

Joint Swelling: Ankles, Wrists

Joint Swelling: Knees Elbows
Joint Swelling: Hips, Shoulders
Joint Stiffness
Confusion, Difficulty Thinking
Word Search Difficulty, Name Block
Memory Loss, Forgetfulness
Shaky
Jerking
Difficulty Reading, Absorbing New Info
Disoriented, Getting Lost
Speech Errors, Wrong Word, Misspeaking
Mood Swings
Depression
Anxiety, Panic
Pelvic Pain
Erectile Dysfunction
Loss of Libido
Anger Control Problems
Trouble at School
Behavioral Issues
Trouble with Peers
Chest Pain
Symptoms Flare or Change Every Four Weeks
Neck Pain
Shortness of Breath