

Thousands of Texans suffer from Lyme and other tick-borne diseases every year. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is transmitted through a bite from an infected tick.

If left untreated, **it can ruin your life.**

BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE.

If you or someone you know is experiencing an unusual array of symptoms that leaves health care providers baffled, consider the possibility of a tick-borne disease diagnosis.

The traditional Western Blot and ELISA blood tests can be helpful in diagnosing a tick-borne disease, but are often inaccurate and should not be solely relied upon to rule out a tick-borne disease infection.

Many medical providers are undereducated about the prevalence and nature of tick-borne disease infections. It's worth the effort to find a medical provider who specializes in diagnosing and treating these complex diseases. Effective treatments can be complicated and some are controversial within the medical community.

EDUCATE YOURSELF.

To learn more about the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, consult these websites:

- www.txlda.org
- www.ilads.org
- www.ticktexas.org
- www.lymecme.info

MYTH # 1

“There’s no Lyme disease in Texas.”



MYTH #1: “There’s no Lyme disease in Texas.”

REALITY: Several species of common Texas ticks can transmit not only the *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria that causes Lyme disease, but also a wide range of other bacteria and parasites that cause other diseases including Babesia, Bartonella, Ehrlichia, Mycoplasma and many others. These diseases are often collectively called “Lyme disease” though are more correctly referred to as “tick-borne diseases.”

Pets, birds and wild animals – especially deer – transport ticks from place to place, putting people at risk for exposure where they least expect it. Lyme disease in Texas is increasing at an alarming rate but few health care providers realize this. If your primary care provider (PCP) persists in believing that there is no Lyme disease in Texas, then consider finding a new PCP.

MYTH #2: “I would know it if I had been bitten by a tick.”

REALITY: The ticks that transmit Lyme and other diseases are often no bigger than a poppy seed and are easy to miss, especially when in the hair. Half of patients with tick-borne diseases don’t recall a tick bite. A rash in the shape of a bull’s eye

may appear after a bite from an infected tick and is diagnostic of Lyme disease.

Unfortunately, only 50-60% of victims get this rash, leaving no tell-tale sign of infection. Without a known tick bite or the characteristic rash, few people would think to consider a tick-borne disease diagnosis.



MYTH #3: “My PCP will recognize a tick-borne disease infection.”

REALITY: Unfortunately, many PCPs believe myths #1 and #2 and will not even consider the possibility of a tick-borne disease diagnosis in a Texas patient. Most Texas PCPs have little experience identifying or treating the complex symptoms of advanced tick-borne diseases.

Unfortunately, blood tests for tick-borne disease yield many false negatives. In such cases, PCPs may wrongly rule out a Lyme disease diagnosis based solely upon a negative test and despite the presentation of other diagnostic symptoms – a common mistake that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cautions against.

MYTH #4: “Tick-borne diseases are hard to catch and easy to treat.”

REALITY: Tick-borne diseases are much easier to catch than most people realize, with the infection occurring within minutes of receiving a tick bite. Lyme disease is relatively easy to treat within the first month after exposure but unfortunately this is when the disease is most often overlooked. When a tick-borne disease is missed during this critical 30-day period, the infection may spread throughout the body, becoming persistent, causing severe and disabling symptoms, and eventually presenting a very complex diagnostic puzzle that many PCPs are not able to solve. Lyme disease can affect all aspects of the body’s ability to function normally, including:

- Neurologic problems such mental confusion, dizziness, insomnia, exhaustion, panic attacks, poor balance, nerve pain, numbness and hypersensitivity to light, sound, touch and smell;
- Rheumatologic problems including fibromyalgia, joint pain, body aches and plantar fasciitis;
- Cardiac problems including chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations and fast heart rate;
- Problems with all other major body systems including gastroenterologic, urologic, dermatologic, gynecologic, ophthalmic, endocrine and psychiatric.