

LYME DISEASE PRESENTATION & UPDATE:

Presented at: Ulster County Community College on the evenings of: June 30th, July 2nd and July 7th of 2014 By Ed Ullmann of Wellness Rx LLC.

Lyme disease has become **serious business in Ulster County**. By now, everybody knows someone who has been treated for a tick bite or someone living with chronic Lyme disease. It's an equal opportunity disease that strikes infants to seniors, all races, income levels and both sexes.

Most people know that Lyme disease is a problem, but they often are not aware that it is now the **fastest growing infectious disease in the United States** and the number one spreading epidemic in the world. The **Center for Disease Control (CDC)** reports that over 300,000 people a year are being infected or 10 times more than previously reported. Know one in Ulster County would argue that this estimate is too high.

Some other facts that people may not be aware of are:

- ◆ According to the independent and nonprofit International Lyme & Associate Disease Society (**ILADS**), **up to 50% of ticks in high risk areas like Ulster County are now infected**
- ◆ That mosquitoes, fleas and spiders in addition to deer ticks can carry the Lyme bacteria. That Lyme bacteria can be transferred from mother to newborn and many experts are now convinced it can be transferred by sexual contact
- ◆ According to ILADS, **less than 50% of patients** with Lyme disease recall a tick bite & only 17% ever find the tick
- ◆ That a mixture of bacteria and other disease pathogens, especially **parasites**, is now entering the body during tick feeding for most people. **All disease organisms must be treated to cure the disease**
- ◆ According to ILADS, **no more than 50% of Lyme cases** ever see the classic "bull's eye" or red ring around the bite location. Recently distributed Lyme disease pamphlets from the CDC (which were 4 years old) said that over 80% of Lyme cases would experience the "bull's eye". This dated information demonstrates just how fast-moving the disease is and just how much catch-up our healthy care system, our public health institutions and insurance companies have to go to be ahead of the Lyme curve
- ◆ According to ILADS, **up to 50% of patients** tested for Lyme disease are **receiving false negative results**. This is primarily because most testing is done at traditional commercial labs that follow CDC guidelines and test only one antibody. Most experts now use a reference laboratory called **iGeneX** that specializes in Lyme disease and tests more than one antigen
- ◆ According to ILADS, **up to 40% of short term treatment courses with antibiotics are not working**, especially if treatment is delayed
- ◆ According to ILADS, **40% of Lyme patients are now ending up with long term health problems** and the average patient is seeing 5 doctors over nearly 2 years before being diagnosed correctly
- ◆ On the hopeful side, the leading Lyme experts are now seeing chronic Lyme disease as a complex interplay of genetics, environmental factors, diet, co-infections, trauma, ones emotional background and a

suppressed immune system. And if there is any area of common agreement its surrounds the immune system. Most people understand the immune system as an integrated system that includes thymus (T-cells), tonsils, lymphatic system and bone marrow which releases white blood cells. The goal of our immune system is to protect us again disease. But **70% of the body's immune system dwells in the digestive tract**, so maintaining balanced digestive health is critical to the body's overall well-being and the treatment of chronic Lyme disease

As most of you know, Lyme disease is caused by a **bacteria called Borrelia**. It's spread to humans and animals by hard-bodied ticks that carry the bacterium. There are over 100 different strains of Borrelia bacteria in the United States and over 300 strains worldwide.

Unique to these spirochete bacteria, it duplicates rapidly, it can change forms and it can “bore into” into cell membranes to elude the immune system and antibiotics. It can also “shield” itself with a mucus-like covering or “biofilm” which makes penetration by antibiotics even more difficult.

According to **Dr. Joseph Burrascano**, a leading Lyme disease researcher, Barrelia bacteria don't grow steady, but rather they **grow in 4 week long cycles**. Therefore, treatment or the killing of the bacteria will only occur during the “growth phases”. Hence, the **need for 4 weeks or more of antibiotic treatment**. Keeping a daily journal is an excellent way to help determine when symptoms are “peaking” or the growth phase of the Lyme bacteria or “evolving” such as early flu-like symptoms.

Most experts also recommend having a plan to deal with the **“die-off” period or the time after extensive antibiotic use when the Lyme bacteria dies and your body becomes overloaded with neurotoxin waste**. The more aggressive the plan the better the recovery. Options include a chelating agent like activated charcoal which attaches directly to the bacteria, bentonite clay, caffeine enemas, a cholesterol lowering medication cholestyramine, chelation, aloe vera juice and natural herbal products such as Sarsaparilla.

Adding to the challenge of treatment is removing or eradicating the parasites and other non-bacterial pathogens which enter the body during tick feeding. A malaria-like parasite called **Babesia** is the most common challenge and treatment with an herbal tonic that includes wormwood (*Artemisia Annua*), Curcumin (turmeric with piperine) and/or barberry is highly recommended. Testing for parasites is difficult since the test must be performed within 20 minutes of a bowel movement while the parasites remain alive. Testing of the rectal mucosa is a much more reliable marker of infestation.

The symptoms of Lyme disease can affect almost every part of the body since the bacteria in the blood stream travels to every organ in the body.

Short-term symptoms include general flu-like symptoms, fever, sore throat, muscle or joint pain, headache, fatigue, depression, migraines and the swelling of the lymph glands especially under the arms.

Long-term symptoms include arthritic pain in joints, night sweats, neurological problems, sleep disturbances, severe fatigue, cognitive difficulties like brain fog, memory loss or concentration problems, dizziness, heart palpitations, burning sensations all over the body and mental health issues like severe depression, psychosis, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Lyme disease can mimic other disease also. Fibromyalgia, Bell's palsy or a loss of muscle tone on one or both sides of the face or a manifestation of meningitis (sever headaches, neck pain & stiffness or sensitivity to light) are the most common.

What experts do agree upon is that carefully removing the tick as fast as possible and **getting early treatment produces the best results**. They also agree that the signs and symptoms of chronic Lyme disease may not appear until weeks, months or years after a tick bite.

At this stage of the Lyme disease epidemic in America, we are still looking for answers. Every individual is different and doctors often have different treatment philosophies.

But there are some practical ways in which we can best protect ourselves.

- ◆ All of us living in these mountains are rugged individuals by nature. We love our pets, love to garden, love the outdoors & love to walk the trails. **We must assume that we will be bitten by a tick**. Ticks need blood to survive. When they are very young they attach to a deer, mice or some other rodent. They suck the blood and drop off the host. Then they enter the nymphal or immature stage of development (April through the end of July) and man becomes the perfect host for their next blood feeding
- ◆ To best prepare, our conscientiousness must shift to being smart during tick season. **Spray our cloths and skin before going especially before going into high risk areas**. These are some products we have found to be of help. Be careful with our pets. **Check daily for ticks on our body**. And eat foods and take natural supplements to boost ones immune system especially during tick season
- ◆ **Buy a tick kit and be prepared for action**. Know how to safely remove a tick , retain its contents and clean bite area afterwards **with an antiseptic** like isopropyl alcohol
- ◆ **Know when to seek treatment:**

If the tick is completely removed **within 6-8 hours**, start to boost your immune system. The risk of getting infected is low.

If the tick is completely removed **within 24-36 hours**, the risk of transferring infectious disease is still low. Aggressively **boost your immune system, stay hydrated** and begin taking a herb tonic like **LymeOut** (can put directly on bite area also). Tonic contains anti-bacterial, immune boosting & anti- parasitic herbs.

If the tick was **not completely removed** or if there is any concerns, seek treatment from a health professional. If the health professional prescribes an antibiotic, make sure it's for at least a **4 week period**; you take a **high dose probiotic** supplement and stay hydrated (**8 glasses of water daily**).

If the tick is found and completely removed **within a 2 week period**, see a health professional immediately. Boost immune system, stay hydrated, take a high-dose probiotic, take a herb tonic like LymeOut and start keeping a **daily journal** to help identify early signs of problems. This includes looking for any skin rashes, watching sleep patterns, energy levels, muscle/joint pains and flu-like symptoms. With antibiotic therapy for at least 4 weeks, the probability of **full recovery is very high**.

If the tick is found and completely removed **after a 2 week period**, see a health professional immediately. At this stage, you must assume that you have been **infected by both bacteria and other pathogens including the parasite Babesia**. Boost immune system, stay hydrated, take a herb tonic or capsule daily with at **least one anti-parasitic ingredient, take a high-dose probiotic and especially keep a daily journal**. Your health professional may recommend getting a **Lyme test** if there is any uncertainty. Try not to use standard commercial labs. Request a lab that tests two different antigens to improve accuracy like www.igenex.com that

specializes in Lyme testing. **Testing kits are available at all Wellness Rx Centers** for bringing to your doctor's office. The good news is that most patients treated with antibiotics and anti-parasitic drugs and/or herbal tonics in the early stages of the infection usually recover completely. The longer the antibiotic treatment, the stronger the recommendation to take daily doses of products to detoxify the harmful debris or neurotoxin wastes resulting from the **bacterial die-off**.

The problems really begin for patients when they **experience treatment relapse** (antibiotics are not working) or start to experience unusual body symptoms and never recall being bitten by a tick (in the Hudson Valley, think Lyme disease early). It's at this time, that one must become their **own private investigator**. This is when the debate on longer courses of antibiotic treatment (oral or intravenously) and treatment of non-bacterial pathogens begins. This is the time when if one is unsure about **treatment regiment or diagnosis**, getting a **second opinion from a Lyme specialist is essential**. This is the time when the reality of insurance restrictions comes into play. This is the time when a declining immune system can trigger or re-activate dormant infections in the body. The longer the patient goes without getting a **correct diagnosis** or the **longer the patient is infected and doesn't get treatment**, the bigger the problems especially permanent damage to joints or the nervous system.

Trying to establish a standard regiment or treatment plan for chronic Lyme disease at this stage of the epidemic is difficult. The Internet is filled with recommendations, blogs from patients and support groups sharing treatments that have worked for them keep expanding and the medical community and our government is finally taking the disease seriously. Over time we will begin to produce treatment regiments based on outcomes and a pattern of individual life stories will emerge.

Here are some recommendations:

1. **Stay hydrated.** 70% of our bodies are water and 3-5% is electrolytes and minerals. At any stage of Lyme, you must be drinking over 8 glasses of water daily
2. Exercise daily, try to manage stress and consider visiting a **certified nutritionist to help design a healthy diet that will boost your immune system**. Try to include fermented vegetables like sauerkraut and mushroom extracts as often as possible. **Limit sugar intake and processed foods since they only fuel the Lyme germs**
3. **Watch for early sign of food allergies and make sure you are not Gluten intolerant**
4. **Get sleep and rest during the day.** Sleep deprivation is detrimental to ones immune function. It's while we sleep that our organs release hormones and enzymes
5. **Nutritional supplements** are essential. Have a blood test to check for any deficiencies. Add to your diet:
 - ◆ Vitamin D3: 5,000 IU units daily
 - ◆ Vitamin B: complex especially Vitamin B6
 - ◆ Vitamin C: 2,000 + mg. daily
 - ◆ Omega-3 fatty acids: 100mg. daily + wild caught fish (anti-inflammatory and cellular benefits).
 - ◆ CoQ10: 200mg. twice a day (cellular function & brain & nervous system)
 - ◆ Magnesium: 1,000 mg. for muscle relaxation
 - ◆ Daily Zinc
 - ◆ Fiber: added to diet to stay regular
 - ◆ Probiotic: high-dose multi-strain (up to 50 billion units daily)
6. Add **immune boosters** to daily diet: tablespoonful of raw honey, aloe vera juice, Elderberry tonic

7. **Be open to natural medicine.** Consider a consultation with a **naturopath** or a specialist in the field. Understand **homeopathic medicine** or an old science which stimulates our body's natural resources to heal itself

Herbal medicine, with or without antibiotic therapy, has a long history of success especially helping to booster the immune system. Many years ago I traveled to China on an American Study Tour. We visited the largest hospital in Shanghi and at the front desk a sign pointed to the left for traditional medicine and to the right for alternative medicine. Turns out their alternative medicine was our western medicine. When we visited the pharmacy it was all herbs for making teas for therapy. Only the back wall of the pharmacy had western prescription medications. Watch a wake-up call!

Herbs do have side effects and can cause serious side effects mixed with some prescription medications. Get advice from an expert in the field and let your treating doctors know about any herbs that you are taking. Herbal treatment takes time to be effective so have patience. Herbal tonics to help with the treatment of Lyme parasites can be very effective. Other herbs like garlic, skull cap and licorice can help cease the growth of the Lyme bacteria. For chronic Lyme patients, once symptoms become pronounced, try adding an herb to your treatment plan that specifically treats each symptom.

In **traditional Chinese medicine** they believe that an infectious disease consists of two sides: the invading pathogens and the body's reaction to the invasion or the strength of the immune system. Treatment is always holistic in nature.8). Make sure your treating doctor truly understands chronic Lyme disease and understands your personal history including any past trauma. Always make sure that a final diagnosis is based on history and symptoms in addition to test results which should include **PH testing to make sure your blood is not acidic** and testing of the functioning of your **adrenal gland to determine any hormonal imbalances**.

- ◆ **Consider detoxification support: liver, bacteria kill-off and especially for heavy metals**
- ◆ **Talk to each other. Don't suffer alone. Join a local support group and ask for help when needed**
- ◆ **Always keep a daily journal. Keep trying to put the dots together**

During the past few months I've interviewed close to 50 patients that had Lyme, was suffering from chronic Lyme or went through the Lyme experience with a love one or friend. Putting together a common thread was impossible. Every story was different and provided clarity on why the Lyme disease epidemic is going to get uglier.

In the Hudson Valley we are in the epi-center and serious reporting of Lyme cases is only begun. We need to:

- ◆ Get new information to our health providers
- ◆ Lobby for expanded insurance coverage
- ◆ Support the local citizens, businesses and providers that are trying to make a difference

Thank you for joining us tonight

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