



The Lowdown On Lyme: Tips For Prevention And Detection

(NAPSA)—While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently announced that Lyme disease is about 10 times more common than previously reported, there are ways you can protect yourself. The new figures showed that as many as 300,000 Americans are diagnosed each year. Because Lyme disease is prevalent and serious, disease experts are reminding people about prevention and detection.

Spread through the bite of an infected tick, Lyme disease can cause rashes and flulike symptoms that can leave you feeling miserable. It's more common than you may think.

Lyme disease is most prevalent in New England, the upper Midwest and West Coast but it's a nationwide problem—infected ticks are in all 50 states.

Despite its prevalence, Lyme remains difficult to diagnose. That's because its symptoms mimic other diseases, namely the flu and chronic fatigue syndrome.

"Lyme disease is a debilitating illness affecting thousands of Americans," said Dr. Bradley Bush, a naturopathic doctor who treats patients in the Lyme hot-spot state of Minnesota. Dr. Bush offers these tips:

- **Reduce your exposure.** Especially during the warmer months, avoid wooded areas. After coming inside, bathe and check your entire body for ticks.

- **If bitten, tweeze.** If you find a tick on your skin, use tweezers to remove it as quickly as possible. Grab as close to the skin as possible, then pull upward without twisting.

- **Know the symptoms.** Early symptoms may include fever, chills, sweats, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea, headache and joint pain. Sometimes, a bull's-eye rash appears.

- **When in doubt, get tested.** Receiving a tick bite is rarely noticed. If you have symptoms, it's risky to take a "wait and see" approach. The earlier you test, the earlier you can be treated.

Traditionally, doctors have been limited to Lyme tests such as the Western blot, which measures the body's antibody response to



Doctors now have a faster and more accurate way to test for Lyme disease so people can get treated sooner and more effectively.

infection. Since 70 percent of patients don't produce an infection response, however, the sensitivity of these tests is low—detecting only about 30 percent of Lyme in early stages and 50 percent in late ones.

As a result, many Lyme victims go undiagnosed. They may suffer needlessly and eventually develop a chronic form of the disease, which becomes even more difficult to diagnose and treat.

Now, however, patients have a new, more accurate option: iSpot Lyme. It detects the actual bacterial infection that accompanies Lyme, resulting in an accuracy rate of 84 percent. It can detect Lyme disease within only four to six days after infection, allowing for earlier detection and treatment. When combined with Western blot, this test provides the most accurate and sensitive means of testing for Lyme.

"With its higher sensitivity and specificity, iSpot Lyme has helped me diagnose patients earlier, leading to faster treatment and improved clinical outcomes," said Dr. Bush. "I've successfully used iSpot Lyme to monitor and retest patients. I use it to rule out the disease and to monitor treatment progress."

The test can be ordered through Pharmasan Labs, a CLIA-approved laboratory with expertise in testing for tick-borne diseases. To find out how to get the test, call (877) 282-0306. You can learn more about Lyme disease and sign up for free news updates at www.ispotlyme.com.