

Contact: Cathy Rubin, (212) 439-8474, gtishrubin@aol.com or MCPR Public Relations, 203-968-6625

For Immediate Release

CAN YOU PASS THE LYME TEST?

Greenwich, CT, February 2008 - Being informed about Lyme disease is the best way to avoid getting infected. Lyme Disease and other tick-borne illnesses are alarmingly on the rise, with 49 of the 50 states reporting thousands of new cases every year. Most of these cases are children. The Northeast is considered a high-risk location for Lyme as determined by the Centers for Disease Control. How informed are **you** about Lyme disease? Why not take the test and see?

Can you Pass the Lyme Test?

Answer True or False.

(To check your answers go to www.timeforlyme.org/takelymetest)

1. Lyme Disease is caused by the *Borrelia burgdorferi*, a bacterium carried in certain ticks.
2. People with Lyme disease always develop a bulls eye rash.
3. The diagnostic tests for Lyme disease are always reliable.
4. Ticks prefer bright sunlight and dry open fields.
5. Light colored clothing helps to identify ticks crawling on you.
6. Lyme disease can be contagious through casual contact.
7. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment reduces the risk of long-term illness.
8. The longer a tick is attached, the greater the probability of transmission of the bacterium causing Lyme disease.

Support Lyme Disease Research and Education

TIME FOR LYME AND C. BECHSTEIN PIANOS PROUDLY PRESENT BARRY ALEXANDER AND FRIENDS at CARNEGIE HALL, in a CONCERT TO BENEFIT "TIME FOR LYME" on March 22, 2008. The Concert will feature internationally renowned baritone Barry Alexander and pianist Cosmo Buono, along with other acclaimed artists and will benefit Lyme disease research and education. For more information go to www.timeforlyme.org

Answers to the Lyme test are below:

1. Lyme Disease is caused by the *Borrelia burgdorferi*, a bacterium carried in certain ticks.

True

Lyme disease is an infectious disease caused by a complex corkscrew shaped bacterium called a spirochete (*Borrelia burgdorferi*).

2. People with Lyme disease always develop a bull's eye rash.

False

Not everyone with Lyme disease gets a bull's eye rash (Erythema Migrans). This rash sometimes begins at the site of a tick bite after a delay of 3-30 days. The rash can expand over a period of several days

and its center may clear as it enlarges, resulting in a bull's-eye appearance but it can also appear like a bruise in dark skinned people and take many other shapes and sizes. It may be warm but is not usually painful. The bull's eye rash is a definitive symptom of Lyme disease.

3. The diagnostic tests for Lyme disease are always reliable.

False

Most tests currently available are indirect detection tests (the immune system's response to the disease), and look for antibodies to Lyme disease spirochetes, not the bacteria. A Johns Hopkins University study concluded that current tick tests are unreliable and that Lyme disease is particularly difficult to diagnose in its early stages when it is most treatable with antibiotics. The diagnosis should be a clinical one based upon signs and symptoms, tick exposure and evaluation of test results. Currently, no tests can rule out Lyme disease. A person can test negative, but still have Lyme disease.

4. Ticks prefer bright sunlight and dry open fields.

False

Ticks prefer tall grass, moist, wooded or leaf littered areas.

5. Light colored clothing helps to identify ticks crawling on you

True

When outdoors whenever possible, wear light-colored clothing, so ticks are more visible to you.

6. Lyme disease can be contagious through casual contact.

False

You cannot catch Lyme disease from other people as one might catch a common cold.

7. Early diagnosis and adequate treatment reduces the risk of long-term illness.

True

The outcome is generally successful if an early diagnosis is identified and adequate medical treatment is received. An early diagnosis is complicated by the inaccuracy of current tests and because symptoms may appear days, weeks, months or even years after an infected tick bite. Like syphilis in the 19th century, Lyme Disease has been called the great imitator and should be considered in the differential diagnosis of rheumatologic and neurological conditions, as well as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, somatization disorder and any difficult to diagnose multi-symptom illness.

8. The longer a tick is attached, the greater the probability of transmission of the bacterium causing Lyme disease.

True

Generally transmission occurs after the tick has had a full feeding and empties the contents of its midgut where the bacteria are found, into the host. Other factors may play a role in earlier transmission of the bacteria such as improper tick removal or presence of the bacteria in the saliva of the tick.

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