

Lyme In Vermont's Children

Many children in Vermont are at high risk for contracting Lyme disease. According to the CDC, the highest infection rates occur in children, ages 5 to 9. Of the 300,000 people infected in the U.S. each year, one in four is a child.

Separate from symptoms such as joint pain and fever, children may have a unique presentation of Lyme disease, including:

- • Mood Swings
- • Vision Problems
- • Headaches and Stomachaches
- • Hyperactivity/ADHD Symptoms
- • Autism-like Behaviors
- • Oppositional Behaviors
- • Self-Mutilating Behaviors
- • Learning Disabilities
- • Trouble with Processing Speed and Memory
- • Vocal/Motor Tics
- • Sudden Onset Anxiety Disorders
- • Light and Sound Sensitivity
- • Difficulty Focusing
- • Obsessive Compulsive Behaviors
- • Dark circles under eyes
- • Irregular Rashes
- • Lethargy

"Some of these symptoms may be very subtle, so it is difficult for [parents and] teachers to realize that they are dealing with a sick child, rather than a child who is daydreaming, or simply trying to avoid his school work."

—S. Berenbaum, LCSW

What You Should Know

Sometimes neurological or cognitive symptoms are the only symptoms of a Lyme infection

Other times symptoms like joint pain, fever, and an erythema migrans ("Bulls-Eye") rash are present.

Pediatric Lyme disease can cause behavior problems

Pediatric Lyme disease has been misdiagnosed as OCD, ADD, or pediatric Bi-polar disorder. It can also cause Depression. When a child exhibits sudden changes in behavior with no known cause, the possibility of Lyme and other tick-borne infections should be considered.

Lyme disease symptoms can be vague, and change daily

Some children with tick-borne disease have been accused of malingering, or trying to manipulate parents, coaches or teachers. Children who have symptoms that appear to be disingenuous may be genuinely ill.

Sometimes there's no rash

The Vermont Department of Health's 2014 Lyme Surveillance Report showed less than half of Vermont children with a confirmed case of Lyme disease had a "Bulls-Eye" rash.



Different Rashes Caused by Tick-borne Diseases