Many children in Vermont are at high risk for contracting tick-borne disease. According to the CDC, the highest Lyme disease 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 tick-borne infection. Other times symptoms like joint pain, fever, and an erythema migrans (“Bulls-Eye”) rash are present.

**Tick-borne 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.

**Vermont ticks carry other diseases, some of which require different treatments than Lyme disease.**

Anaplasmosis, Babesia, Erlichiosis, Powassan Virus, Borrelia Miyamotoi, and others.

**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