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LymeDisease.org launches interactive Lyme Disease Symptom Checklist

Think you may have Lyme disease? Check your symptoms with new online tool.

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LOS ANGELES, April 27, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Think you may have been bitten by a tick? Not sure if you have Lyme disease? A new online symptom checklist tool, developed by LymeDisease.org, one of the largest patient advocacy organizations, may help in determining the likelihood that you've contracted the illness.

Lyme disease, a bacterial infection transmitted by the bite of a tick, often mimics other illnesses and can be extremely difficult to diagnose. Yet early detection is critical to successfully treating the disease. The Lyme Disease Symptom Checklist is the only interactive symptom checker for Lyme disease.

The checklist tool allows users to answer a short list of questions, including "Have you been exposed to a tick habitat?" and "Have you had a red expanding skin rash?" Other questions address common symptoms seen in both early- and late-stage Lyme disease. As each question is answered, a text box is displayed providing more in-depth information, along with the referenced sources.

"The Symptom Checklist is not intended to diagnose," says Lorraine Johnson, JD, MBA, Chief Executive Officer of LymeDisease.org, "but to serve as an educational tool for both patients and physicians." The checklist helps patients document exposure and common symptoms suggestive of Lyme disease. After the questionnaire has been completed, the patient can print it out to share with their doctor.

Each year, at least 300,000 people are diagnosed in the U.S. with Lyme disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are no reliable tests for Lyme disease and studies indicate that only 25% of patients recall a tick bite and less than 50% ever notice a red expanding rash. Therefore, doctors must diagnose the disease based on a patient's medical history, symptoms and exposure to ticks.

"Many people don't know what symptoms to look for or what questions to ask," says Johnson. "And since Lyme disease is a clinical diagnosis, having a thorough consultation and dialogue with your physician is crucial. We hope this tool will make it easier for patients to speak with their doctors if they suspect they may have Lyme disease."

The Lyme Disease Symptom Checklist is the second initiative launched by LymeDisease.org in the past several months. The organization recently introduced MyLymeData, a big data project that allows individuals to share their health information and experiences living with Lyme disease to help advance research. In less than six months more than 4,200 patients have already enrolled in MyLymeData.

About LymeDisease.org

Since 1989, LymeDisease.org has advocated nationally for quality accessible healthcare for patients with Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. We are committed to shaping healthcare policy through advocacy, legal and ethical analysis, education, physician training, and medical research. Our mission is to prevent Lyme disease, prevent early Lyme disease from becoming chronic, and to obtain access to care for patients with chronic Lyme disease.

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