



Lyme Disease Awareness Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Lyme disease, also known as Lyme borreliosis, was first recognized in Lyme, Connecticut, in 1975. Seven years later, its cause, a spirochete or spiral-shaped bacterium called *Borrelia burgdorferi*, was discovered by a researcher at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Although the northeastern United States has the highest number of cases, Lyme disease has spread to more than 40 States. In 1988, there were more than 5,000 reported cases of Lyme disease, and it has been estimated that many more people have been infected with the disease.

Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of the deer tick, which inhabits primarily grasslands and wooded areas. Deer ticks are carried by several different animals including deer, cats, dogs, raccoons, and field mice.

A common early symptom of Lyme disease is the appearance of a localized ring-shaped rash with a clearing in the center. Other signs may include flu-like symptoms such as fatigue, mild headache, body aches, and a slight fever. The chances of successful treatment with antibiotics are greatest in the early stages of the disease. Unfortunately, in many instances, early symptoms may go unnoticed or may never appear. In addition, because it can resemble other illnesses, Lyme disease is sometimes misdiagnosed. If not treated early, serious complications may develop that can affect the heart, nervous system, or joints. Lyme disease in pregnant women can result in miscarriages, stillbirths, and birth defects.

To avoid deer ticks and reduce the chance of contracting Lyme disease, people who are going into wooded areas or tall grass should wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and apply tick repellent to their clothing. They should also thoroughly check for ticks upon returning indoors. The deer tick is smaller than a dog tick and is most likely to transmit Lyme disease in the nymphal stage when it is very tiny. Anyone bitten by a tick should watch for symptoms suggestive of Lyme disease and seek early medical treatment if they occur.

Recognizing the widespread impact of Lyme disease and the need for research in this field, the National Institutes of Health is committed to finding better ways of identifying, preventing, and treating all tick-borne illnesses.

To enhance public awareness of Lyme disease and its debilitating side effects, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 142, has designated the week beginning July 23, 1989, as "Lyme Disease Awareness Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this occasion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning July 23, 1989, as Lyme Disease Awareness Week. I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, communications media, and people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush