

FOREWORD

Since ancient times, ticks have been considered “disgusting parasitic animals,” associated with a wide variety of terrestrial and flying vertebrates and even with a few marine snakes and lizards. In temperate zones and tropical countries, ticks surpass all other arthropods in the number and variety of disease agents they transmit to humans and their domestic animals. While some species are host-specific and rarely feed on humans, others will attack and feed on any blood source including humans that enter their biotopes.

Because of the already small sizes of ticks, particularly of the larval and nymphal stages, and also because of the painless attachment and feeding, ticks often go unnoticed until they have dropped, leaving an itching and more or less severe inflammation at the site of the bite. Undoubtedly hundreds of Lyme disease patients were or still are unaware of having been bitten by the small “freckle with legs,” that is, the nymphal deer tick.

Well, Karen Forschner was one such patient. After clearing brush with her husband, Tom, she came down with symptoms suggesting Lyme disease. She had never heard of this illness and its association with ticks crawling in her backyard and on her cats and dogs. The illness, unfortunately, remained undiagnosed through Karen’s pregnancy and affected her son, Jamie, who became ill the second day of his life.

Suffering daily vomiting, eye tremors, and paralysis, Jamie was seen by dozens of physicians who subjected him to brain scans, dyes, probes, muscle biopsies, operations, and hospitals without leading to a proper diagnosis and effective treatment.

It was then that Karen, determined to find the answers for Jamie’s problems, began consulting the medical literature on Lyme disease. She found sufficient similarities to suggest that her son did inherit her illness—an assumption that eventually was confirmed by laboratory tests in 1987.

The more Karen read about Lyme disease, the more she became frustrated by the medical services and the limited information about a disease that infects large segments of the American people, especially in the northeastern and midwestern states. Thus, in January 1988, with the help of her husband, Tom, and her parents, and supported by a board of directors with experts from the medical, scientific, and public advocacy communities, she started the Lyme Borreliosis Foundation—a nonprofit organization devoted to prevention, education, and treatment of Lyme disease.

As president of the foundation, Karen has been the driving force in pro-

viding the general public and medical profession with information about the disease. In promoting the foundation's activities, she has appeared on talk shows and symposia including *20/20*, *Inside Edition*, *Home Show*, *CNN*, *NBC*, *ABC*, and *CBS News*, and has been mentioned in the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, *Macleans*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Family Circle* ("Women Who Make a Difference").

With her book, *Everything You Need to Know about Lyme Disease and Other Tick-Borne Disorders*, Karen provides a compendium of knowledge she has accumulated during her search for answers to her and Jamie's struggles with Lyme disease. In an easily understandable language, she introduces the reader to the complex clinical aspects of Lyme disease and discusses the often controversial issues of diagnosis and treatment. She also presents a historical analysis of findings that led to the emerging awareness of Lyme disease in Europe and the United States. A special chapter is devoted to brief reviews of other tick-borne diseases in this country, namely Rocky Mountain spotted fever, relapsing fever, tularemia, Colorado tick fever, tick paralysis, and the emerging ehrlichioses. The causative agents of these entities have been shown to occur occasionally in the same tick species that transmit the agent of Lyme disease.

Several chapters deal with the biology of tick vectors, tick control, personal protection against tick bites, and the safe removal of attached and feeding ticks.

I am very pleased to write the foreword for this outstanding book. *Everything You Need to Know about Lyme Disease and Other Tick-Borne Disorders* belongs on every family, business, and health care professional's bookshelf. The information is scientifically based, and the scope provides easy-to-understand information for the novice as well as new information for the well informed. Unique to this book are the *outstanding* appendices. They include a tremendously valuable historical time line of scientific discoveries (with the only available references to the original published works), a detailed bibliography, lists of support groups, resources available around the world, and Internet addresses.

Lyme disease continues to be the most prevalent tick-borne illness in this country and will continue to affect thousands of people, young and old, every year. *Everything You Need to Know about Lyme Disease and Other Tick-Borne Disorders* certainly lives up to its title and should be read by anyone living in tick-infested areas.

—Willy Burgdorfer, Ph.D., M.D. (hon.)