

My name is Lori Riddle.

My journey with Lyme Disease began just over a decade ago with an undetected tick bite on my head. After discovering the engorged tick and removing it, I woke up 2 days later with a severe case of Bell's Palsy and immediately went to the doctor. My bloodwork showed positive with Lyme Disease within 30 seconds of the test, indicating that we didn't catch it early enough to mitigate most symptoms. Bell's Palsy is incredibly hard to navigate when your job is teaching. I struggled to deliver lessons to my middle schoolers, as speaking was difficult.

I immediately began a 28 day regimen of Doxycycline. If you are unfamiliar with this drug, it is fairly harsh and creates its own set of problems. Doxy renders the patient highly sensitive to sunlight, which affects those in positions where sun exposure is necessary for their livelihood. The side effects of Doxycycline and sun exposure can be very detrimental to the patient. The presence of Doxy in the system increases the patient's susceptibility to severe sunburn. I, myself have experienced this side effect, resulting in severe sunburn with accompanying blisters and subsequent scarring on my arms. Medical attention was necessary to address the burns and blisters.

In recent years, I have gotten 2 more tick bites, both testing positive with Lyme Disease. The most recent bite went undetected for about 2 weeks as the tick was attached in a location that wasn't immediately visible, and it was a very small tick. When I eventually located the tick in the middle of the night, I did not bother to check as I thought it was just a mosquito bite that was itchy. I scratched it off of myself and went back to sleep. Eventually, the bullseye grew to about 6 inches across. With this most recent bite, I developed symptoms that were similar to

mono. I had several weeks where all of my muscles and joints hurt, and my joints were all swollen. I was placed on another 28 day cycle of Doxycycline and basically stuck inside for about 6 weeks of this summer. During that time, I slept an excessive number of hours as I was exhausted. Thankfully, I was off work for the summer so I was able to take the time to heal. This is not the case for many who contract Lyme. They do not have the option to take time to rest and heal.

I'm hoping to see advancement on tackling the tick problems in Pennsylvania as well as an investigation into alternative drugs for treatment. While Doxycycline is effective, it does hinder those who are required to be outdoors for their jobs.

Thank you for your time.