



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 28, 2020, Peterborough

Peterborough Public Health Identifies First Lyme Disease-Positive Tick of the Season

Residents Advised to Take Precautions and Be Tick Smart

BLACKLEGGED TICKS
MAY BE FOUND IN THIS AREA



To avoid tick bites:

- ✓ use an insect repellent containing DEET;
- ✓ stay on trails, minimize contact with long grasses or wear proper protective clothing;
- ✓ perform regular tick checks on yourself, your family, and your pets;
- ✓ remove attached ticks immediately; and
- ✓ submit ticks to the Peterborough Public Health for testing.

Some blacklegged ticks may transmit
LYME DISEASE
& other tick-borne diseases

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The first Lyme disease-positive tick of the season has been identified by Peterborough Public Health.

“The National Microbiology Laboratory confirmed that a blacklegged tick found in our area has tested positive for Lyme disease,” said Julie Ingram, Manager of Environmental Health programs. “This serves as a good reminder to be “tick smart” and take precautions when going into any wooded and grassy areas, especially those with known tick populations.”

Ingram noted that the infected tick was discovered as part of Peterborough Public Health’s recent active surveillance work conducted in Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Additional surveillance will be conducted this fall. If blacklegged ticks are identified from the same location, it will inform Public Health Ontario’s [Estimated Risk Areas map](#).

Residents are encouraged to monitor themselves for ticks, and to use the eTick app to identify the species of tick, since only blacklegged ticks carry the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease. The eTick app can be downloaded from www.etick.ca and allows anyone with a smart phone to snap a photo of a tick and upload it directly to the website to receive a species identification. You can also submit a photo of the tick online, without downloading the app. Once successfully submitted, the identification results will be available within 48 hours. Real-time mapping of tick submissions is also shown on the website.

If you are unable to use the online service, you may submit a tick for testing to Peterborough Public Health. When bringing a tick to Peterborough Public Health, please be aware that only ticks found on humans will be submitted for identification and testing. Any ticks found on pets or other animals should be taken to a veterinarian.

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What to do if you find a tick:

Ticks can be as small as a sesame seed and their bites are usually painless. If you do locate a tick on your body, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible and pull the tick straight out. Removing the tick within 24 hours is key to preventing Lyme disease infection. The best and quickest way to determine if the tick is the species that carries Lyme disease is to use the eTick app or website.

Lyme disease has gained the attention of health officials because cases in Ontario are increasing. In 2019, residents submitted approximately 280 ticks to Peterborough Public Health for identification and testing. Final analysis of results from submissions later in the year are pending, however, from January to June 2019, of the twenty-three ticks that were confirmed positive for Lyme disease, five of those came from Peterborough County.

Lyme disease is a potentially serious illness and growing health risk across Ontario. It is caused by the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. While not all blacklegged ticks carry Lyme disease, populations of infected blacklegged ticks are spreading throughout Ontario. Some southern areas of the geographical area serviced by Peterborough Public Health have been identified as a risk area by [Public Health Ontario](#).

Preventing tick bites:

The best way to prevent Lyme disease is to avoid getting bitten by ticks in areas where they live, such as tall grasses and wooded habitats. Before heading out, wear long, light-coloured clothing and tuck pant legs into socks. Spray an insect repellent containing DEET on your clothes. Check for ticks when you return from the outdoors, and it's a good idea to shower after to wash off any ticks that may be crawling on your body.

The signs of Lyme disease can be categorized in three stages. However, the first sign is usually a circular rash in the shape of a bull's eye. Other additional symptoms include fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, fatigue and swollen lymph nodes. For more details on precautions and symptoms of Lyme disease, please visit www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca and search for "Lyme disease."

For more information on tick submission or general inquiries about ticks please contact the Vector Borne Disease Program at Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000, ext. 240.

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For further information, please contact:

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Monday, July 27, 2020, Peterborough

West Nile Virus Confirmed in Local Mosquitoes

Residents Reminded to Get Rid of Standing Water and Avoid Mosquito Bites

Peterborough Public Health is advising the public that mosquitoes in the City of Peterborough have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). The mosquitoes were trapped from July 20 to 23, 2020.

This is the first positive mosquito pool found in Peterborough this year. According to [Public Health Ontario](http://PublicHealthOntario), as of July 18, 2020 there were no WNV positive mosquito pools identified in the province and no human WNV cases. During the summer months and early fall, PPH sets traps weekly throughout the City and County of Peterborough to gather mosquito specimens for WNV testing.

“Now that we’ve identified mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus in our area, it’s especially important that residents take care to prevent mosquito bites,” said Wanda Tonus, Public Health Inspector. “This is a good reminder for residents to get rid of any standing water in their yards and to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.”

Ms. Tonus noted that the majority of WNV cases do not show symptoms. About 20% of infected people may have a mild flu-like illness with fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes or other non-specific symptoms that last several days. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, or eye pain. Less than one percent of infected people will develop neuro-invasive disease, with older age groups and males disproportionately affected.

Although the risk of becoming infected is low, prevention against mosquito bites is the best protection. Individuals can protect themselves from bites in several ways:

- Cover up when going outside between the hours of dusk and dawn. Remember to wear:
 - a long-sleeved shirt or jacket and long pants (tucked into your socks for extra protection)
 - light-coloured clothing
 - if you will be outside for a long time, wear special clothing that is designed to protect you from bugs

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- Use insect repellent containing DEET. (DEET is a powerful chemical. Always read the label directions for use. Or, ask your pharmacist for help when choosing a DEET product.)
- Clean up:
 - once a week, get rid of standing water around your home (mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water, even small amounts)
 - keep bushes and shrubs clear of overgrowth and debris (adult mosquitoes like to rest in dense shrubbery)
 - turn your compost pile often

The City of Peterborough has completed one round of larviciding catch basins within its jurisdiction and a second round is underway.

For additional information on protection measures against West Nile virus such as reducing mosquito breeding sites and the safe use of insect repellents, please visit www.publichealthontario.ca or www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca.

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For further information, please contact:

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