

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **HEALTH UNIT REMINDS THE PUBLIC TO BE TICK SAVVY THIS UPCOMING LONG WEEKEND**

NORTH BAY, ON - The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (“Health Unit”) would like to remind the public to be aware of ticks when spending time outdoors over the long weekend. May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month, and with the increase in numbers of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Ontario, it is important to protect yourself from tick bites.

“If you’re staying nearby or traveling this weekend, remember that it is possible to encounter an infected tick almost anywhere in the province”, says Brendan Hatton, Public Health Inspector. “Though the Lyme disease risk in the Health Unit district is relatively low, always take precautions when being outdoors.”

Methods to prevent tick bites include:

- Use bug spray or other insect repellants that contain DEET or Icaridin;
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks;
- Wear light-coloured clothing to spot ticks more easily;
- Search your clothes and body for ticks at least once a day, paying special attention to areas such as the groin, navel, armpits, scalp, behind ears and knees;
- Don’t forget to tick check children in your care;
- Try to stay on cleared paths when possible, as ticks are more commonly found in wooded areas, or in tall grasses, bushes and shrubs; and
- Take a shower as soon as you can after being outdoors

If you find a tick on your body, remove it carefully with tweezers. Grasp the tick by the head as close to the skin as possible. If parts of the tick’s mouth break off and remain in the skin, remove them with tweezers. If you can’t remove the mouthparts, leave them alone and let the skin heal. Collect the tick, and make note of where you believe to have encountered it. See your health care provider right away, and when possible, bring the tick to the Health Unit.

For more information on Lyme disease, please visit the Health Unit website at [www.myhealthunit.ca/lyme](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/lyme) or call 1-800-563-2808.

## Quick Facts

- Blacklegged ticks can carry Lyme disease. Ticks are small blood sucking insects that cannot fly. They live in wooded or brushy areas and attach themselves to passing animals or people. While most ticks do not carry diseases, it's important to avoid and check for them and remove them as soon as you find them.
- A person can become infected with Lyme disease if they are bitten by an infected tick.
- In most cases, the tick must usually be attached for at least 24 hours for the bacterium that causes Lyme disease to be passed on to the host.
- The most common symptom of Lyme disease is an expanding skin rash, which can appear between three and 30 days after a bite.
- If left untreated, other symptoms may develop including fever, chills, headache, fatigue muscle and joint aches, problems with your heartbeat, breathing, balance and short-term memory.
- The earlier the treatment is received the better.
- There has been an increase in confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Ontario, partly due to an increase and expansion of blacklegged tick populations to new areas of the province.
- Infected ticks are continuing to spread and can now also be found in in the Simcoe-Muskoka district, York Region and all of Eastern Ontario as well as Hamilton and parts of Northwestern Ontario. For the Lyme disease risk area map go to:  
[http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Lyme\\_disease\\_risk\\_areas\\_map.pdf](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Lyme_disease_risk_areas_map.pdf)

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