

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Deepika Lobo, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: July 6, 2023

RE: New reportable tick-borne diseases

QUICK FACTS

- Three tick-borne diseases -- Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, and Powassan virus – have now been added to [Regulation 135/18](#) as reportable Diseases of Public Health Significance (DoPHS), in response to reports of emerging tick-borne diseases and an increase in blacklegged tick populations across Ontario.
- [Regulation 569 “Reports”](#) has been amended to specify the reporting requirements for these new DoPHS to Medical Officers of Health.
- Case reporting for these new DoPHS will support the detection of areas of emerging risk, enhance surveillance, and improve care, treatment, and support.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Similar to Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis and Powassan virus are tick-borne diseases transmitted primarily through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick.
- Although currently these diseases are rare, predicted climate change is expected to impact the spread of vectors including ticks, which is likely to affect the distribution of vector-borne diseases.
- PHO’s [Lyme Disease Risk Map](#) provides a provincial picture of where there are known blacklegged tick populations and can be used for risk assessment.
- Please consider vector-borne illness as part of differential diagnosis when patients present with a non-specific febrile illness of unknown origin, particularly during spring and summer months when ticks are most active.
- For information on clinical presentation and evaluation, please refer to:
 - Public Health Ontario [Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases](#) webpage
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Tickborne Diseases of the United States](#)
- For testing information, refer to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory Services [Test Information Index](#).
- You can refer your patients to [e-tick.ca](#), a free tick identification platform.
- Promptly report any suspected or confirmed cases of Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis and Powassan virus to Halton Region Public Health by calling 311.

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- Although Halton Region is identified as an estimated risk area, the risk of exposure to blacklegged ticks infected with these new DoPHS is currently low. Preventing exposure through personal protective measures are key to preventing disease in humans.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Public Health Ontario's [Ontario Lyme Disease Risk Area Map, 2022](#)
- Public Health Ontario's [Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases](#) webpage