

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: April 21, 2023

RE: Lyme Disease: Updates to Ontario Health Clinical Guidance Document

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario Health has updated recommendations for treatment of patients with early localized Lyme disease.
- Public Health Ontario Laboratory has recently implemented Modified Two-Tier Testing (MTTT) for detection of antibodies against the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*.
- Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick. These ticks are present in Halton Region and human cases of Lyme disease are known to occur here.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Updated treatment recommendations are provided in the clinical guidance document [Management of Tick Bites and Investigation of Early Localized Lyme Disease](#). Updates include doxycycline as the preferred antibiotic treatment for children and adults, and updated recommended dosages and treatment options.
- Promptly report any suspected/confirmed cases of Lyme disease to Halton Region Public Health by calling 311 or using the online [Lyme disease reporting form](#).
- [MTTT](#) has a 15-25% higher sensitivity during early localized disease. Initial screening test will continue to be performed by IgG/IgM ELISA and samples that are reactive or indeterminate will be further tested using a second ELISA rather than a Western Blot.
- This change will support a clinical Lyme disease diagnosis, particularly in the early localized stage of the disease (by reducing the chances of a false negative result), and improve the turnaround time for Lyme disease testing and earlier intervention.
- While sensitivity during early-localized diseases is improved with MTTT, clinical exam findings and risk assessment of tick exposure remain key components for diagnosis of Lyme disease.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- Although Halton Region is identified as an [estimated risk area](#), the risk of exposure to infected blacklegged ticks is currently low. Preventing exposure through personal protective measures are key to preventing disease in humans.
- The risk of Lyme disease is low if ticks are removed within 24 hours of attachment.
- Please use [e-tick.ca](#), a free tick identification platform.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Clinical Guidance Document: Management of Tick Bites and Investigation of Early Localized Lyme Disease, Ontario Health, 2023](#)

[Lyme disease testing](#), Public Health Ontario

[Ontario Lyme disease Risk Area Map](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) 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.