

Deer Ticks

Infected Ticks Found in Provincial Park

Posted on July 06, 2015 12:02 Article Rating

Tests Confirm Infected Ticks Found in Area Provincial Park

Samples taken from a local provincial park have confirmed the presence of ticks infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

Less than a week after encouraging residents to be mindful of blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks), the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has received confirmation that tick samples taken from Presqu'ile Provincial Park in Brighton have tested positive for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. The samples were collected as part of the Health Unit's surveillance program taking place in conservation authorities and provincial parks throughout Northumberland and Haliburton counties and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

"We were not surprised by the results, as we know ticks carrying this bacteria are spreading further into our area," says Richard Ovcharovich, Manager of Environmental Health for the HKPR District Health Unit. "This just means it's more important than ever for people to take precautions to protect themselves from tick bites."

Ticks that spread Lyme disease act like hitchhikers – settling on tall grasses and bushes until they can attach themselves to a passing animal or person. The ticks will feed on their host's blood, and in some cases, may transmit Lyme disease to an individual if attached for more than 24 hours, which is why it's important to detect and remove ticks promptly, Ovcharovich says.

To prevent ticks from biting, the Health Unit recommends:

- Wearing light-coloured clothing, which makes it easier to spot and remove ticks
- Wearing closed footwear and socks and, when possible, wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck pants into your socks, especially if walking in long grass
- Using a tick repellent that contains DEET (follow the manufacturer's directions for use)
- Checking your body for ticks at least once a day if in a location where blacklegged ticks are known to be present. Pay special attention to the groin, scalp and armpits. A mirror can be useful to check the back of your body, or ask someone to check it for you.
- Remove the tick quickly and properly to prevent infection if you find one on your body. This is best done by using finely-tipped tweezers, and grasping the tick as close to your skin as possible. Pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite site with rubbing alcohol and/or soap and water.
- Protecting your pet as they can carry ticks that spread Lyme disease. Be sure your pet wears a tick or flea collar and check your pet frequently for the presence of ticks. Contact your vet if you have concerns about your pet being exposed to ticks.

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, tiredness, and muscle and joint pain. Another indicator of Lyme disease is a skin rash in the shape of a bull's eye. Symptoms can occur as early as three days after infection or as long as a month after a tick bite. Anyone experiencing Lyme disease symptoms should seek medical attention.

To learn more about Lyme disease, call the Health Unit at 1-866-888-4577 or visit the Health Unit's ebsite at www.hkpr.on.ca

For media inquiries, contact:

Richard Ovcharovich, Manager, Environmental Health, Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, (705) 324-3569