



**May 2017**

**RE: Lyme Disease Awareness**

To Parks, Museums, Educational Programs, and Recreation Facilities:

It's a great time of year to enjoy the outdoors. It is also the time of year when we need to be especially careful about blacklegged ticks (also called deer ticks). These are very small ticks - sometimes as small as the period at the end of this sentence. These ticks can carry the germ that causes a bacterial infection called Lyme disease. Deer ticks are found across Nova Scotia – so it's important to be vigilant and take simple preventative measures.

Please help us to promote the prevention of Lyme disease by displaying the **attached Enjoy the Outdoors Safely poster** in a prominent location. Also attached is a **Tick Talk fact sheet**, which is great for display or handout. You'll find more information on Lyme disease and ticks at the Department of Health and Wellness website at <http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/lyme.asp> (the site includes a great video for kids!). You can also call Public health at 1-888-823-8224.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eastern Zone Medical Officer of Health

## Tick Talk

It's a great time of year to start enjoying time outside. When outside, it is important to be careful in long grass, wooded or shrub covered areas where there may be blacklegged ticks (also called deer ticks). These are very small ticks – sometimes as small as the period at the end of this sentence. These ticks can carry the germ that causes a bacterial infection called Lyme disease.



Deer ticks



Bulls-eye rash



Tick habitat



Prevent tick bites

Help protect yourself and your family whenever you enjoy the outdoors by:

- Applying insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin to exposed skin and clothes.
- Wearing light colored long sleeved shirts and pants, closed shoes, and tucking pant legs into socks.
- Keeping lawns mowed short.
- Putting playground equipment in sunny, dry places away from wooded areas, yard edges, and trees.
- **Perform daily tick checks.** Always check for ticks after being outdoors. Because ticks must usually be attached for at least a day before they can transmit the bacteria that cause Lyme disease, early removal can reduce the risk of infection.

Tick checks can help prevent Lyme disease. If the tick carries the bacteria, it can only pass Lyme disease to a human or animal after it has filled itself with blood. This takes 36 hours. Removing the tick as soon as possible may help to stop the spread of Lyme disease into the body.

Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. The earliest and most common symptom of Lyme disease is a bulls-eye rash at the site of the bite. You may also develop flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headaches, tiredness, stiff neck, pain and swelling in the joints, and aches and pains all over your body. Symptoms may appear in stages and may appear over a period of months. If you have these symptoms after a tick bite, contact your healthcare provider.

- For a great video for kids and for more information on Lyme disease, visit <http://www.novascotia.ca/hpp/cdpc/lyme.asp> or contact your local Public Health office.
- For ideas on landscape management around parks, buildings and homes, visit <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/CDPC/documents/Landscape-Management-Handbook.pdf>