

Public Health
277 Victoria Street
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W2

May 21, 2015

To: Parent/Guardian

Re: Blacklegged Ticks

As recently reported in the media, Toronto Public Health has found blacklegged ticks on Algonquin Island and Morningside Park. These ticks can be infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. The ticks have been sent to the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg for further identification and testing for these bacteria. Testing can take up to several weeks.

Late last fall, Toronto Public Health found blacklegged ticks in Rouge Valley. Finding blacklegged ticks in multiple locations in the City suggests these ticks are becoming established in Toronto. However, the risk of Lyme disease in Toronto is low and the vast majority of ticks are not infected.

Blacklegged ticks are found in bushy or wooded areas that have tall grass or lots of leaves on the ground. We are aware that some schools have planned end-of-year outdoor field trips. Parents can help their child take appropriate precautions when enjoying outdoor activities in wooded and bushy areas by having them:

- Wear light coloured clothing so ticks can be easily spotted;
- Wear long sleeves and long pants; tuck pants into socks;
- Use bug repellent containing DEET (please follow manufacturer's instructions); and
- Inspected by an adult or buddy for any attached ticks.

Ticks found on the skin should be promptly removed. Transmission of Lyme disease requires the tick to be attached for at least 24 hours. Ticks removed can be submitted to Toronto Public Health for identification and further testing.

For more information, please visit our web site at toronto.ca/health or call 416-338-7600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. McKeown".

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health