

WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a **very** serious disease which attacks the central nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including humans. Without immediate preventative treatment, rabies is fatal in animals and humans. Rabid animals don't behave normally. In Canada, the animals that most often transmit rabies are foxes, skunks, bats, raccoons, dogs and cats. The virus is transmitted through close contact with the saliva of infected animals, most often by a bite or scratch. The virus can also be transmitted by licks on broken skin or on mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose or mouth.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY PET HAS BEEN EXPOSED?

If you think your pet has been exposed to a rabid animal, minimize contact with your pet. Keep your animal away from humans and other animals and speak to your veterinarian immediately. Remember, regular immunization of your pets minimizes the risk of your pet contracting the disease.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'VE BEEN BITTEN OR SCRATCHED?

Immediately wash the bite or scratched area thoroughly with soap and water, as washing greatly reduces the chance of infection. **Then contact your family doctor right away or go to the nearest hospital emergency or urgent care facility and say that you are concerned about rabies.** Treatment is available and can prevent disease.



Protect yourself
from West Nile
virus, Lyme disease
and rabies

Adapted with the permission of Region of Waterloo Public Health



fight THE
bite!

Avoid bites from
mosquitoes,
animals and
ticks.



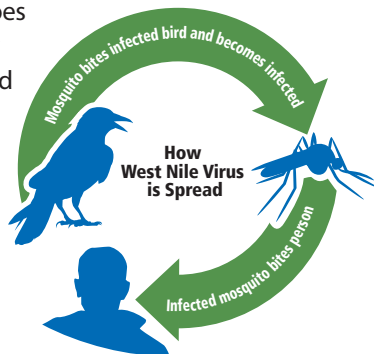
Protect yourself
from West Nile
virus, Lyme disease
and rabies

Diseases can spread to people through mosquito or tick bites, or contact with animals. What's important to know is that you can take action to avoid these diseases.

The Halton Region Health Department is focused on the prevention and control of diseases in our region, and everyone in our community has a role to play. Help to build a healthier family and community by taking actions outlined in this pamphlet to minimize the health risks.

WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

West Nile virus (WNV) is a virus mainly transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on the blood of birds carrying the virus.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Most people who are infected with the virus show no symptoms, or they experience mild, flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, body aches or fatigue. The symptoms usually last for a few days. About 1 in 150 people infected with West Nile virus will experience more serious infections of the central nervous system, including encephalitis and meningitis. Medical attention should be sought immediately if illness is getting progressively worse or is not improving.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you find a dead bird, **do not call the health department**. Double-bag the bird and put it out with your garbage or bury it without bagging at least two feet deep in your yard. Avoid direct contact while handling the bird and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

When outdoors, use an insect repellent according to manufacturers' instructions.

Amount of DEET Recommended for Children and Adults

Age Group	Suggested % of DEET	Recommended Number of Applications per Day
Newborn to 6 months	DEET is not recommended for this age group. Use netting or limit time outdoors at dusk and dawn to prevent mosquito bites.	
6 months to 2 years	10% or less	Not more than 1 (do not apply to hands or face)
2 years to 12 years	10% or less	Not more than 3
> 12 years	Up to 30%	Follow instructions on label

WHAT IS LYME DISEASE?

Lyme disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*. In Ontario, these bacteria are spread by the bite of blacklegged ticks.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The first sign of infection with Lyme disease is usually a circular rash at the site of the bite. This rash looks like a red bull's eye and is called erythema migrans. Other symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, chills and swollen lymph nodes. If you develop any of these symptoms, it's important to seek medical attention quickly and to tell your doctor that you are concerned about Lyme disease and when and where you were bitten. Lyme disease can develop into a chronic disease that may be more difficult to treat in later stages.



ARE THERE TICKS IN HALTON REGION?

The ticks that carry Lyme disease are not commonly found in Halton Region at this time. However, they are common in other parts of Ontario, in particular at Long Point, Point Pelee National Park, Rondeau Provincial Park, Turkey Point, Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area, Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area, and the St. Lawrence Island National Park. Blacklegged ticks are most active in May, June, and July.



Known Blacklegged Tick Populations in Ontario



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT THE BITE!




West Nile Virus

Fact	Act!
Only female mosquitoes bite. They are attracted to dark colours and to carbon dioxide released in your breath.	When outdoors, wear: • long-sleeved shirts and long pants • light-coloured clothing • tightly woven clothing Try to avoid • being outdoors between nightfall and daybreak • Shady wooded areas at anytime
Hungry mosquitoes can be deterred!	When outdoors, use an insect repellent containing DEET, or other approved products. Always apply according to manufacturers' instructions.
Mosquitoes can sneak into your house!	Don't leave unscreened doors and windows open, especially in the evening and at night when mosquitoes are most active. Make sure your screens are in good repair with no gaps or holes.
Mosquitoes lay their eggs in still water. As adults, they usually stay within 2 km of where they were hatched.	Promptly eliminate any standing water on your property, including water in eavestroughs or containers such as bird baths, spare tires, and flower pots. This will protect you and your neighbours.
A licensed exterminator can apply environmentally-friendly chemicals to standing water to stop mosquito eggs from turning into biting adults.	Dial 311 to report standing water.



Lyme Disease

Fact	Act!
Ticks are tiny! Before they feed, they are the size of a sesame seed. Tick at actual size  1-5 mm	• Wear light-coloured clothing. This makes it easier to find ticks on your clothing. • Cover up with long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Tuck your pants into socks.
Ticks can't jump or fly. They prefer wooded and bushy areas with high grass and plenty of leaves on the ground. They wait on low vegetation and then attach to hosts.	When hiking, stay on the path and avoid contact with overgrown brush, vegetation and leaf litter. After being outdoors, carefully check your clothing and entire body for ticks.
Hungry ticks can be deterred!	When outdoors, use an insect repellent containing DEET, or other approved products. Always apply according to manufacturers' instructions.
The longer a tick is attached to your body, the higher the risk of infection with Lyme disease. If a tick is attached to your skin for less than 24 hours, your chance of getting Lyme disease is small.	If you find a tick on your body: • Use fine-pointed tweezers to grab the tick's head and mouth parts as close to your skin as possible. • Pull slowly. Do not twist or rotate the tick and try not to damage it. • Place the tick in a plastic container or bag so the Health Department can send it for testing. • Thoroughly wash the area where you were bitten with soap and water.
Public Health can test ticks for Lyme disease.	After removing a tick from your body, call Public Health at 1-866-442-5866



Rabies

Fact	Act!
Rabid animals may be found in Halton Region.	Stay away from wild animals and animals acting strangely.
By law, pets over the age of 3 months must be vaccinated regularly against rabies.	Vaccines need to be updated every 1 to 3 years. Contact your veterinarian for more information about vaccination. You can be fined if your pet is not up-to-date with rabies vaccination.
Any animal bite should be reported to Public Health. Doctors who treat your injury must report the incident to Public Health.	Public Health will investigate to assess the risk of rabies. They will place the animal under observation for 10 days to ensure it is rabies-free, and can issue treatment for the person bitten if a physician recommends it.
If untreated, rabies infection is fatal in animals and humans.	Following a bite or incident, wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water and contact a health care professional immediately. Get treatment as quickly as possible to prevent the chance of rabies infection.

If you think you may have any of the illnesses above, or have been bitten by an animal, contact your doctor immediately and inform the Halton Region Health Department at **1-866-442-5866**.

For more information on West Nile virus, Lyme disease or rabies, dial 311 or **1-866-442-5866** or visit www.halton.ca