

Lyme Disease: Awareness

Health indicator report

Background

- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information on the level of public awareness and perceived risk of Lyme disease among adults aged 18 and over living in Halton Region.
- Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick.¹ Blacklegged ticks are most commonly found in wooded, brushy or tall grassy areas.¹ Lyme disease varies in severity and symptoms. Symptoms of Lyme disease can include: a red bulls eye rash, muscle aches, fever, fatigue and headaches. The earlier that Lyme disease is diagnosed, the better the chances are that treatment will be successful. For more information visit the [Halton Region Lyme Disease webpage](#).¹
- This health indicator report uses data from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS).

Key findings

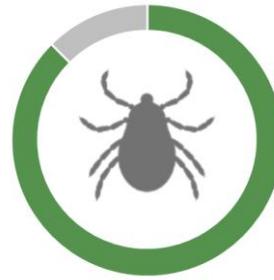
- 88% of Halton adults reported that they had ever read, seen or heard anything about Lyme Disease.
- 67% of Halton adults reported that they knew that Lyme disease is transmitted by ticks.
- 9% of Halton adults reported that they believed they were at high risk of getting Lyme disease, 21% believed they were at medium risk, 41% believed they were at low risk, 25% believed that they were not at risk, and 5% did not know what risk they were at of getting Lyme disease.



Awareness of Lyme Disease

Overview

- In 2018, 88% of Halton adults reported that they had ever read, seen or heard anything about Lyme Disease, and 12% had not. This has not changed since 2016.



88% of Halton adults reported that they had ever read, seen or heard anything about Lyme disease

Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, Halton Region, 2018

Sex

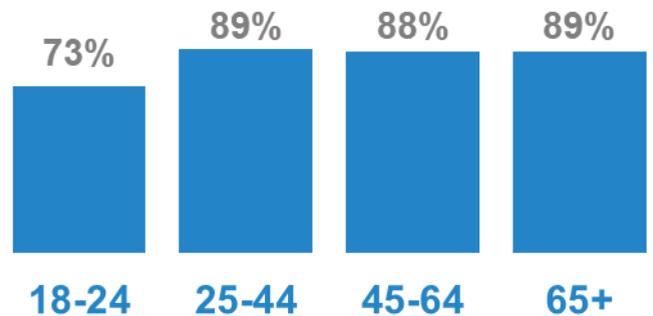
- In 2018, females were more likely than males to report that they had ever read, seen or heard about Lyme Disease. This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by sex, Halton Region, 2018

Age

- In 2018, adults aged 18-24 were less likely than all other age groups to report that they had ever read, seen or heard about Lyme disease. These differences were **statistically significant** when comparing adults aged 18-24 to all other age groups.



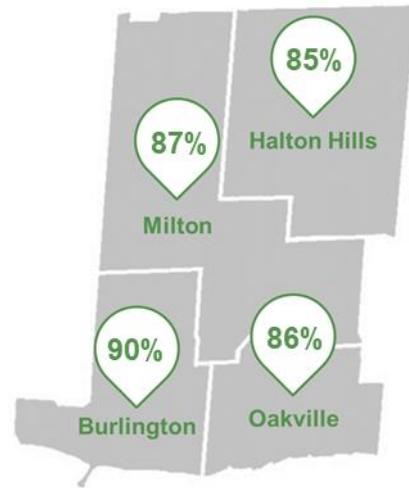
Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by age, Halton Region, 2018



Awareness of Lyme Disease

Municipality

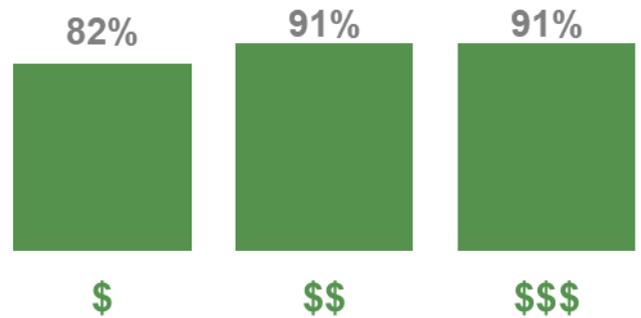
- In 2018, there were no significant differences by municipality in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that they had ever read, seen or heard about Lyme disease.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by municipality, Halton Region, 2018

Income

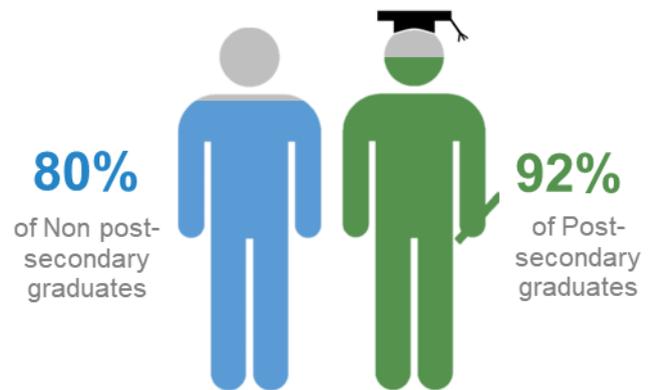
- In 2018, adults in the low income group were less likely than those in the middle and high income groups to report that they had ever read, seen or heard about Lyme Disease. This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by neighbourhood income group Halton Region, 2018

Education

- In 2018, the percentage of Halton adults who had ever read, seen or heard about Lyme disease was higher among post-secondary graduates, compared to non-post secondary graduates. This difference was **statistically significant**.



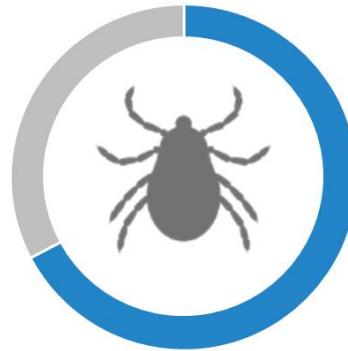
Percentage of adults aged 25 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by education, Halton Region, 2018



Awareness of Lyme Disease transmission

Overview

- In 2018, 67% of Halton adults reported that they were aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, and 33% were not aware that Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks.



67%
of Halton adults reported they knew Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks

Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, Halton Region, 2018

Sex

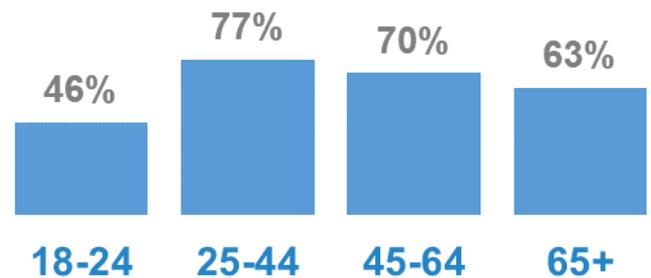
- In 2018, females were more likely than males to report that they were aware that Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks. This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, by sex, Halton Region, 2018

Age

- In 2018, adults aged 18-24 were less likely than all other age groups to report that they were aware that Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks. Adults aged 65+ were less likely than those aged 25-44 and 45-64. These differences were **statistically significant** when comparing adults aged 18-24 to all other age groups.



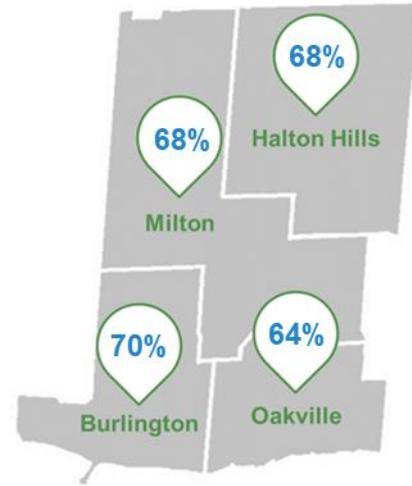
Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, by age group, Halton Region, 2018



Awareness of Lyme Disease transmission

Municipality

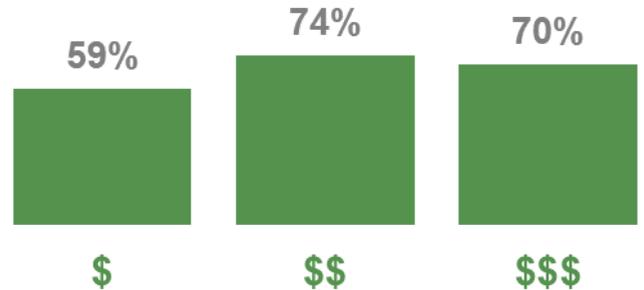
- In 2018, there were no significant differences by municipality in the percentage of Halton adults who reported that they were aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, by municipality, Halton Region, 2018

Income

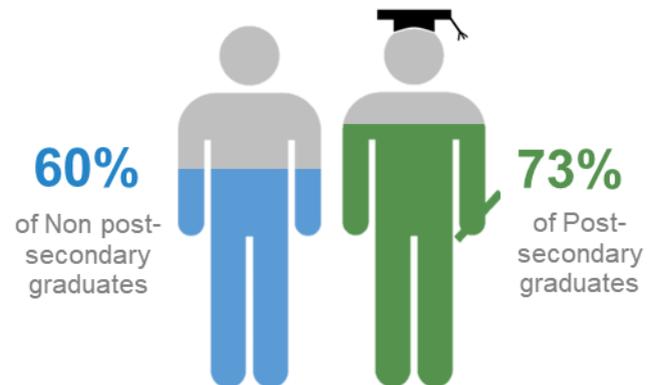
- In 2018, adults in the low income group were less likely than those in the middle and high income groups to report that they are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks. This difference was **statistically significant** when comparing those in the low income group to those in the middle income group.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks, by neighbourhood income group, Halton Region, 2018

Education

- In 2018, the percentage of Halton adults who are aware Lyme disease is transmitted via ticks was higher among post-secondary graduates, compared to non-post secondary graduates. This difference was **statistically significant**.



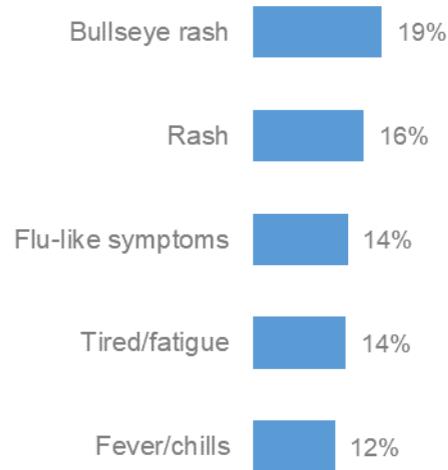
Percentage of adults aged 25 and over who reported ever reading, seeing or hearing about Lyme disease, by education, Halton Region, 2018



Awareness of Lyme Disease Symptoms and Perceived Risk

Lyme Disease Symptoms

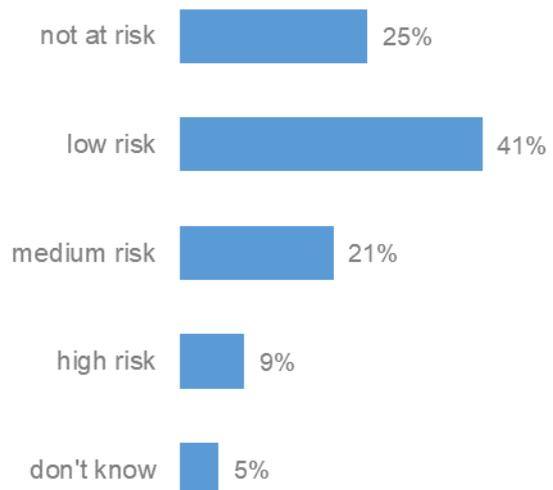
- In 2018, Halton adults identified the following early symptoms of Lyme disease:
 - 19% bullseye rash
 - 16% rash
 - 14% flu-like symptoms
 - 14% tired/fatigue
 - 12% fever/chills



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who identified early symptoms of Lyme disease, by symptom, Halton Region, 2018

Lyme Disease Perceived Risk

- In 2018, Halton adults felt during the past spring or summer they were at the following risks of getting Lyme disease:
 - 25% not at risk
 - 41% low risk
 - 21% medium risk
 - 9% high risk
 - 5% did not know



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over, by perceived level of risk of getting Lyme disease, Halton Region, 2018

About RRFSS

- The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System is an on-going telephone survey (land line and cell phone) used to collect information on attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and awareness of issues related to health in Halton. RRFSS is conducted by the Institute of Social Research and York University.
- Each year, a random sample of approximately 1,200 adults aged 18 and over are surveyed in Halton Region.
- In 2016, RRFSS underwent changes in sampling and analysis methodology. **Therefore, it is not recommended to compare data from the 2016 onwards to past years of RRFSS data.**
- For more information on RRFSS methodology and limitations, see the RRFSS Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at halton.ca.

Data notes

Definitions:

Responses such as “I guess, I think so” etc., when asked if the respondent had read, seen or heard anything about Lyme disease were categorized as “yes”. Responses such as “redness, red spots, bumps, itchiness” etc., when asked what the early symptoms of Lyme disease are were categorized as “rash”.

Data Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [2018], Halton Region Health Department and Institute for Social Research, York University.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability. Estimates marked with a double asterisk (**) are not reportable.

References

1. Halton Region. Lyme Disease. Accessed June 2017 from <http://www.halton.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=9683>

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics webpage at halton.ca.

Last updated: November 2019