

## HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Patrick Galange, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: July 24, 2025

RE: West Nile virus, Lyme disease and Anaplasma are active – testing and management updates

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### QUICK FACTS

- Adult mosquitoes in Halton Region have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). Human WNV cases often follow up to 6 weeks after the first positive mosquitoes are detected.
- As of June 30, 2025, Public Health Ontario requires a [Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Virus intake form](#) to be submitted along with the [General Test Requisition form](#) when requesting specific vector-borne or zoonotic virus tests, including those for WNV PCR.
- There has been a recent increase in Lyme disease tick positivity rates in Halton and locally acquired human cases of Lyme disease are trending upwards.
- Cases of anaplasmosis, while not as common as Lyme disease, have been increasing in Ontario. Two ticks collected through active tick surveillance tested positive for Anaplasma for the first time in Halton Region in spring 2025.

### KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

#### MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

- West Nile virus and other arboviruses present in Ontario, such as California serogroup viruses and Eastern equine encephalitis, should be considered in any patient with febrile or acute neurological illness and recent exposure to mosquitoes, blood transfusion, or organ transplantation.
- Serology is the preferred method to detect WNV infection. Visit PHO's [West Nile Virus – Serology and PCR](#) webpage for testing criteria.
- For WNV PCR testing, it is mandatory to provide the clinical information, relevant travel, and relevant exposures on the [Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Virus Intake form](#). Test requests that are submitted without the appropriate mandatory information are subject to cancellation.
- Report any suspected or confirmed cases of WNV illness to Halton Region Public Health by calling 311.

## TICK-BORNE DISEASES

- Active tick surveillance in Halton provides evidence that the blacklegged tick populations are expanding, and more ticks are testing positive for the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. The positivity rate increased from 17% in 2023 to 27% in 2024, with ticks collected in spring 2025 showing a further increase to 38%.
- For Lyme disease clinical guidance, including treatment information, refer to the [Management of Tick Bites and Investigation of Early Localized Lyme Disease](#).
- As of June 30, 2025, PHO has changed the testing algorithm for anaplasmosis. To improve test utilization and align with best practice recommendations, PHO now recommends PCR over serology for diagnostic testing. For additional laboratory information, see PHO's [Anaplasma – PCR and Serology](#).
- In 2024, 160 cases of anaplasmosis were reported in Ontario. There were no human cases of anaplasmosis reported among Halton region residents in 2024.
- Public Health Ontario has launched an [Ontario Vector-Borne Disease Tool](#) which offers weekly surveillance data on vector-borne diseases in Ontario and risk assessment maps using data from 2014 to the present.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Includes information that can be shared with patients on safe tick removal and risk reduction strategies*

- [Tick-borne diseases](#), Ontario.ca
- [Lyme Disease](#), Halton.ca
- [Anaplasmosis](#), [Babesiosis](#), [Powassan virus](#), Public Health Ontario

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL [DOCTORS@HALTON.CA](mailto:DOCTORS@HALTON.CA).