

June 23, 2015

RE: Blacklegged Ticks

Dear Parents/Guardians;

The Regional Municipality of York Public Health branch has completed its spring active tick surveillance program and found one blacklegged tick near Joker's Hill and the Koffler Scientific Reserve in the Township of King. The tick has been sent for testing to determine if it carries the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease.

Last fall, York Region Public Health found two blacklegged ticks through active tick surveillance in the Rouge Valley within the City of Markham. Both ticks tested negative for the bacteria. Findings suggest these ticks are becoming established in some areas of York Region.

The risk of Lyme disease is generally considered to be low and the vast majority of ticks are not infected with the bacteria. Not all tick bites will spread Lyme disease. If a tick is infected, it is most likely to spread the infection after being attached for 24 hours or more. Lyme disease does not spread from human to human.

Some schools have planned end-of-year outdoor field trips and parents may have enrolled their child/children in camps and outdoor activities offered throughout the summer. We encourage you to continue to participate in these activities, but take precautions.

Follow these simple safety tips when heading into wooded or brushy natural areas:

- Wear light-coloured pants and long-sleeved tops to help spot ticks
- Choose closed footwear and tuck your pants into your socks
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET
- Search your body for ticks, especially the groin, scalp, back and underarm areas
- Bathe or shower after coming indoors to wash off unattached ticks
- Remove attached ticks from your body as quickly as possible – instructions on how to do this safely are available at york.ca/lymedisease
- Submit the tick to your local health unit for identification
- Check your pets for ticks

For more information on Lyme disease and the safe removal of a tick, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit york.ca/lymedisease

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karim Kurji". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Dr. Karim Kurji, MBBS, MSc, FFPHM, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
York Region Public Health