

June 19, 2026

**RE: Enjoy the outdoors – but be tick aware!**

Attention: Municipality of the District of Shelburne,

Spring, summer and fall in Nova Scotia are wonderful seasons where people spend countless hours outdoors at the many beautiful beaches, trails, parks, and wooded areas across our province. As we take in these natural riches we should also be mindful of the presence of ticks. These small arachnids – sometimes as small as the period at the end of this sentence – are found across Nova Scotia and can transmit the germs that cause tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease, Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis, and Powassan viruses. These diseases can be serious, particularly if not recognized and/or treated promptly. Unfortunately, these diseases are becoming more entrenched - rates in Nova Scotia continue to rise every year.

We ask that you please help us promote tick safety and the prevention of tick-borne diseases, by spreading the word in your communities. **We would appreciate if you could share this letter along with the attached poster to municipal staff, community groups and recreation programs (including for distribution to staff and parents of children in summer camps).**

Here are some **steps that people can take to protect themselves and their children**, especially in grassy, wooded, or shrub-covered areas:

- Apply insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin to exposed skin and clothes. Follow directions on the package carefully. Infants under the age of six months should not use these products. Please visit [Personal Insect repellents - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/insect-repellents.html) for specific instructions.
- Wear light colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants, closed-toed shoes, and tuck shirts into pants and pant legs into socks.
- Keep lawns mowed short.
- Put playground equipment in sunny, dry places away from wooded areas, yard edges, and trees.
- Check your whole body/children's bodies for ticks when possible (especially armpits, ears, knees, hair, groin) and take a bath or shower within two hours of coming indoors. This makes it easier to find ticks and washes away loose ones.
- Clothing is available that is treated with Permethrin (a chemical repellent) and can protect against ticks and mosquitoes for those 16 years of age and older. This clothing is not approved for those under 16 years of age in Canada.

**What do I do if I find a tick on me/my child?**

If you find a tick on your body, remove it as soon as possible to lessen the risks of infection. Here's how to remove them safely:

- Carefully grasp the tick with tweezers as close to the skin as possible.

- Gently and slowly pull the tick straight out. Don't jerk, twist or squeeze it.
- Clean and disinfect the site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- To dispose of a tick, place it in a sealed plastic bag and either drown it in rubbing alcohol or freeze it for several days. Don't crush ticks with exposed fingers. Once dead, throw the bagged tick in the garbage.
- Do NOT burn, squeeze, or coax a tick's mouthparts from your skin using other methods.

Blacklegged ticks are known to transmit tick-borne diseases in Nova Scotia, so it's important to identify what type of tick bit someone. [eTick.ca](http://eTick.ca) is a free service that can identify the type of tick via photo submission usually within 24 hours. Though Lyme and other tick-borne diseases in Nova Scotia are transmitted by the blacklegged (deer) tick, not all black-legged ticks carry disease and not all blacklegged ticks have black legs.

Blacklegged ticks that are attached to someone's skin for at least 36-48 hours pose the highest risk of transmitting the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. **One of the earliest and most common symptoms of Lyme disease is a rash at the site of the tick bite that's often shaped like a bull's-eye. Other symptoms of Lyme disease may include fever, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain, headaches and occasionally irregular heartbeat, facial paralysis, weakness, confusion, and seizures.** Symptoms of other tick-borne diseases can include those listed above for Lyme disease, as well as abdominal pain, vomiting, and/or jaundice. Some people with tick-borne diseases do not recall a tick bite. If you've been outdoors, especially in wooded areas, forests or areas where tall grasses and/or shrubs are present, or have found a tick on your body, and show these symptoms, you should be evaluated by a healthcare provider. Symptoms for tick-borne diseases typically appear within a few days to up to five weeks after you have been bitten.

There is no vaccine for tick-borne diseases in Canada, however, there are antibiotics for three of the four tick-borne diseases that are known to be in Nova Scotia. If a tick has been attached and there are signs that it has been there for more than 36 hours (the tick is swollen, or you believe it has been attached for at least 36 hours) you may be eligible for antibiotics to prevent Lyme disease. You can visit a pharmacist, or a physician or nurse practitioner, to see if you need preventative antibiotics.

### How to keep your pets safe

While dogs and cats cannot directly transmit Lyme disease to people, a tick may enter your home on your pet's body and move on to bite a human. It is important to follow precautions for them too!

- Use veterinarian-recommended tick and flea preventatives for dogs and cats, especially during peak tick season (spring through fall). Not all products are safe for all species or ages—consult your vet for the most appropriate option.
- Check your pets for ticks daily after they've been outdoors—especially around the ears, neck, under the collar, and between the toes.
- Avoid letting pets roam through tall grasses or wooded areas where ticks are more likely to be found.

- Keep pet resting areas clean and inspect pet bedding regularly, especially if they spend time outdoors.

For more information on tick-borne diseases, please visit: <https://novascotia.ca/DHW/CDPC/lyme.asp>

Thank you again for supporting efforts to make our communities aware of how they can practice tick safety.

Public Health Western Zone, Nova Scotia Health  
(902) 742-7141