



May 2018

RE: Enjoy the outdoors – and check for ticks!

Dear Principals, Staff, Parents, Guardians and Students:

It's a great time of year to enjoy the outdoors – physical activity, fresh air and time with family and friends is so important! With being outside more, we also need to be aware of ticks. These are small insects – sometimes as small as the period at the end of this sentence – that are found across Nova Scotia.

Tick checks help protect us from the germs that ticks can carry. Removing ticks as soon as possible can prevent or reduce the risk of infection. Follow these steps to help protect against ticks, 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.
- 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 for ticks and, when possible, take a bath or shower within two hours of coming indoors. This makes it easier to find ticks and washes away loose ones.
- If you find ticks, 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. Do not jerk, twist or squeeze it.
 - Clean and disinfect the site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
 - Dispose of the tick in a sealed plastic bag and put in the garbage.
 - Do NOT burn, squeeze or coax a tick's mouthparts from your skin using other methods.

Only the blacklegged tick can transmit the germ that causes Lyme disease, and only after being attached for at least 24 – 36 hours. One of the earliest and most common symptoms of Lyme disease is a rash that's often shaped like a bull's-eye. The rash occurs on the same site as the bite. Other symptoms include fever, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain and headaches. If you've been exploring outdoors, especially in wooded areas, forests, areas where tall grasses and or shrubs are present, or have found a tick on your body, and show these symptoms, see a healthcare provider.

To learn more about tick safety, visit <https://novascotia.ca/ticksafety/> or call your local Public Health office at 1-800-213-0633.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Musgrave".

Mary Musgrave, Manager
Health Protection, Public Health

Risk Map - Public Communication

Key Messages

- The purpose of the map is to inform the public that the province of Nova Scotia is an “at risk” area for Lyme, and therefore it is important to take preventative measures regardless of where people are outdoors in Nova Scotia.
- The map is to inform the public of the varying levels of risk of Lyme Disease in Nova Scotia ranging from lower to moderate to higher.
- The risk area categories are based on historical Lyme Disease case data and tick surveillance (active and passive) data. This year’s review of tick and human data has resulted in changes in risk category of several counties in Nova Scotia. As we collect and analyze more data in the future, further changes to risk categories may occur.
- As the map indicates, there is a risk anywhere in the province with a higher risk for most of the mainland. Protect yourself and your loved ones.
 - Dress appropriately – wear enclosed shoes, tuck your shirt into your pants, tuck your pant legs into your socks. Wear light coloured clothing so that ticks are easier to see.
 - Walk along well-traveled paths, stick to the centre of the trail and avoid longer grass and vegetation
 - Use insect repellent that contains DEET or Icaridin. Follow the directions on the package carefully
 - Landscape management – reduce the number of blacklegged ticks around your home by keeping your lawn mowed short, remove leaf litter and clear tall grasses and brush around your home
 - **Do a thorough tick check!** Check body and clothing for ticks after being outside and have a bath or shower within two hours of being outside as it is easier to spot ticks and wash off loose ticks. Ticks like warm places on the body – remember to check around ears, behind knees, in the hair, between the legs/groin area, and around the waist.
 - If a tick is found on your person, make sure to remove it safely. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible with tweezers, gently and slowly pull the tick straight out of the skin. Once the tick is removed, clean the area of the bite with soap and water. Disinfect with rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide.
 - **Don’t crush a tick with your fingers. Flush it down the toilet,- drown in rubbing alcohol or freeze in a plastic sealed bag before disposing the tick.**

For use in school e-bulletins/newsletters, on social media, etc.

Let's talk ticks! It's fun to enjoy the outdoors and it's also important to protect yourself from ticks – a small insect that can carry the germs. Ticks are found all across Nova Scotia. Check your body and clothing for ticks after spending time outside. If you find a tick, ask an adult to help you remove it safely. Learn more at novascotia.ca/ticksafety/

Tick Talk: Tips for enjoying the outdoors safely

- Apply insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin to exposed skin and clothes.
- Wear light colored long sleeved shirts and pants, closed shoes, and tuck pant legs into socks.
- Checking your whole body for ticks and, when possible, taking a bath or shower within two hours of coming indoors. This makes it easier to find ticks.

Enjoy the outdoors and protect yourself from ticks. Learn more at novascotia.ca/ticksafety/

Do you check for ticks? Make it a regular thing. Learn more at novascotia.ca/ticksafety/

Tick Check Basics

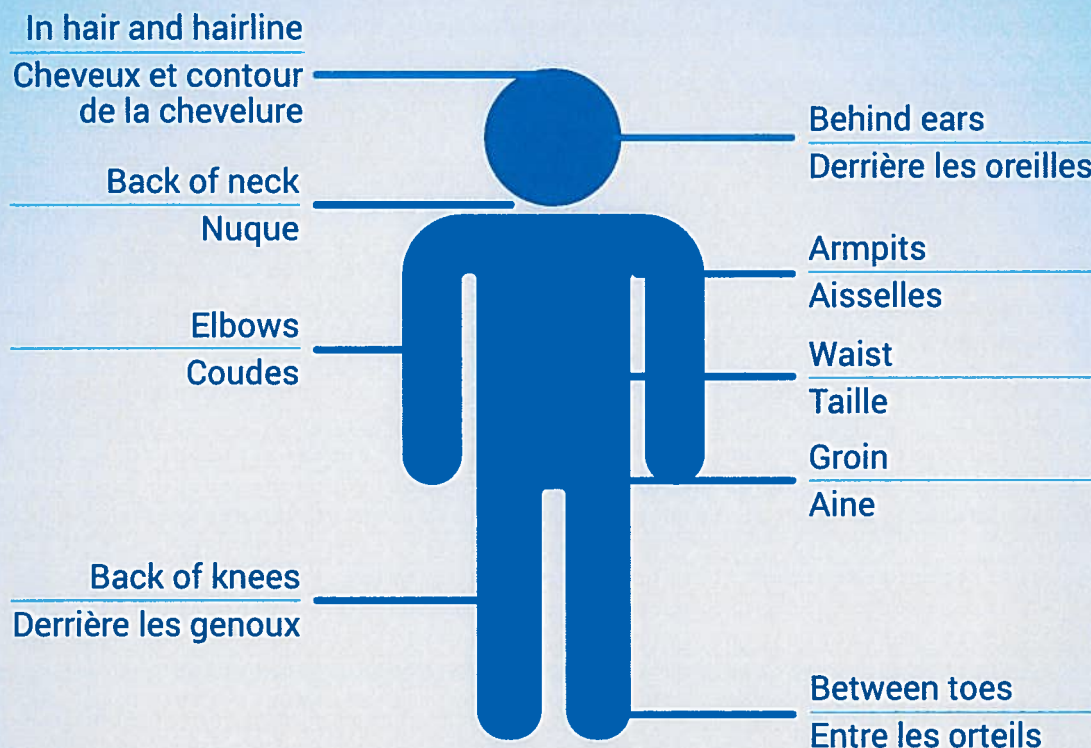
Conseils relatifs aux tiques

Check your body and clothing for ticks after spending time outside.

Ticks like warm places on the body.

Vérifiez votre peau et vos vêtements après avoir passé du temps à l'extérieur.

Les tiques aiment les endroits bien au chaud.



- Don't forget to check your pets
- A bath or shower within two hours of being outdoors makes it easier to spot ticks

- N'oubliez pas de vérifier vos animaux de compagnie.
- Il est plus facile de voir les tiques si vous prenez un bain ou une douche dans un délai de deux heures après avoir passé du temps à l'extérieur.

For more information, including how to remove a tick safely, visit novascotia.ca/ticksafety

Pour obtenir plus d'information, y compris sur la façon d'enlever une tique de façon sécuritaire, consultez le novascotia.ca/ticksafety (en anglais seulement).