

Program/Service Information Report

2019 Tick and Lyme Disease Summary

To:	Board of Health
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Prepared By:	Mike Coburn, Public Health Inspector, Environmental Health Patty Montague, Health Promotion Specialist, Health Protection Shawn Zentner, Manager, Environmental Health
Approved By:	Christopher Beveridge, Director, Health Protection
Submitted By:	Dr. Nicola J. Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Key Points

- Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick (BLT) and is the most commonly transmitted vector-borne disease.
- In 2019, there were eight (8) confirmed cases of Lyme disease reported within Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) (2.7 cases per 100,000 people).
- Passive surveillance involved accepting ticks submitted by the public, taken from human and animal hosts for identification and surveillance only.
- Partnered with the Ontario Veterinary College, active surveillance continued in 2019 and yielded one (1) BLT, in Belwood, which was negative for all relevant pathogens.
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's (WDGPH) prevention and control program for Lyme disease focused on: (a) passive and active surveillance for BLTs and tick identification services; and (b) education and communication efforts focusing on the cause and symptoms of Lyme disease.

Program Requirements

Compliance with OPHS and Accountability Indicators:

In compliance

Not in compliance. If not in compliance, provide additional information about the variance and how it will be addressed.

Highlights

With the continued range expansion of BLTs, in Ontario, Lyme disease is becoming a more serious public health threat. WDGPH's prevention and control program for Lyme disease focuses on passive and active surveillance for BLTs, as well as stakeholder communication and education.

Passive Tick Surveillance

Passive surveillance involved accepting ticks submitted by the public, taken from human and animal hosts for identification. Results of tick identification are communicated with residents, usually within two (2) business days. Submissions in 2019 are summarized below:

- Total number of ticks submitted = 371 (92% increase from 193 in 2018)
- Total number of BLTs submitted = 198 (more than double the 82 in 2018)
- Total number of BLTs from WDG = 124 (more than double the 52 in 2018)
- Total number of BLTs from WDG Positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* = 2 (compared to 1 in 2018)

Active Tick Surveillance

Active surveillance continued in 2019 and yielded one (1) BLT, in Belwood, which was negative for all pathogens. Areas where active surveillance was conducted included:

- Luther Marsh, Grand Valley;
- Smith Loop Property, Puslinch;
- Belwood Lake Conservation Area, East Garafraxa;
- Preservation Park, Guelph; and
- Guelph Lake Conservation Area, Guelph-Eramosa.

Communication and Education

Tick Identification Workshops

In 2019, WDGPH hosted two (2) tick identification workshops.

Public Education

In 2019, several strategies were used to raise awareness among the community regarding Lyme disease and steps for preventing tick bites:

- Tick identification cards and tick remover keys were distributed at community events;
- 900 Tick ID/Remover kits were provided to Grand River Conservation Authority for distribution at their parks within WDG;
- WDGPH Website:
 - Updated with addition of Pet Tick Tracker resource;
 - Tick and Lyme disease page had 3,005 unique page views;
- Social Media:
 - Promoted web content and how to do a full-body check and remove a tick safely
 - Promoted blog (let's talk ticks);
 - Total of 20 messages which saw a total of 14,579 impressions;
- Advertisement:
 - Tick awareness ad in the Guelph Mercury-Tribune (Ran June 6, 2019)
- Blog post (repost) - Let's Talk Ticks (July 2, 2019)
- Earned Media:
 - [Rabies, tuberculosis, ticks: Here's what WDGPH says you should be doing to protect yourself](#) (Orangeville.com, Dec 13, 2019);
 - ['I thought I was going to die': 3 Dufferin County residents battling Lyme disease hope to help others avoid similar fate](#) (Orangeville.com, April 29, 2019);
 - [3 lone star ticks have been found in Waterloo region: Public Health](#) (cbc.ca, July 4, 2018) (Chuck quoted in article); and
 - [Tick testing & surveillance not stopping locally](#) (OrangevilleToday.com, July 25, 2019) (Radio interview ft. Chuck Ferguson).

Related Reports

- Program/Service Information Report BH.01.MAY0119.C08 - 2018 Tick and Lyme Disease Summary – Program/Service Information Report.