

# KEEP SAFE AGAINST TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

They are among the tiniest of arachnids and you may not even feel their bite. But the harm ticks can inflict can lead to debilitating Lyme disease if left unchecked.

With the return of warm, summer weather, ticks are alive and active. According to the Region, 13 people contracted Lyme disease in Halton last year.

While our community is not considered "an endemic area" for ticks, Halton's Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health Dr. Hamidah Meghani said the public health department is continuously monitoring the disease.

The risk of tick-borne diseases in Halton is low. Still, we must take precautions to help reduce our risk of getting bitten by a tick.

If you dress in light-coloured clothing, it makes adult ticks and nymphs (small stage of the tick), easier to see when they are on you as they are darker in colour. The health department recommends spraying bug repellent with DEET or Icaridin on your clothes and skin before venturing outdoors.

Do a tick check when you or your children return inside. Don't forget your pets - even if they don't go outdoors (like cats), anyone can bring them inside and they can find your indoor pet.

If possible have someone check you from the back, or hop in a quick shower to help remove any unattached ticks.

It is important to know that not all ticks carry the bacteria (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) that cause Lyme disease.

Lyme disease transmission depends on the length of time the infected tick is attached. Ticks that are removed quickly and have been attached for less than 24 hours are not likely to transfer the bacteria. However, if the tick has been attached for longer than a day, you may be at an increased risk and it is recommended that you consult your health care provider.

If you find a fat tick, it is an indication that it has been feeding for a longer period of time and you should provide this information to your health care provider.

Symptoms of Lyme disease, according to the region, including a bull's-eye rash, extreme fatigue and weakness, headache and neck stiffness, fever or chills, swollen lymph nodes, spasms, numbness or tingling, among others.

The region offers a submit-a-tick program that allows residents to submit ticks for testing. "If you find a tick, remove it with fine-tip tweezers, store it in a container and submit it for identification and testing," said Meghani. "With support from the community, this program helps us assess the risk of tick-borne diseases in Halton and keep residents safe and healthy."

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## 'Doug Days of Summer' ...



## FREE METEOR SHOWER PUBLIC EVENT AUG. 11

IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT YEAR FOR THE ANNUAL PERSEID METEOR SHOWER, WRITES MARIO CARR



**MARIO CARR**  
Column

It's going to be a great year for the annual Perseid meteor shower.

The meteor shower, which peaks Aug. 12, is considered to be one of the best meteor showers of the year and from a dark sky you could see 50 to 80 meteors per hour.

Once again, the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers will open the gates at Binbrook Conservation Area to hold its annual free Perseid meteor show- er public night on Saturday, Aug. 11, 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

for any notices before leaving home.

Here are August stargazing events, which are listed in the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers calendar.

Aug. 14: The crescent moon is above Venus in the early western evening sky.

Aug. 20: The moon is near Saturn in the southern evening sky.

Aug. 23: The moon is near Mars in the southern evening sky.

For more information, see the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers website ([amateurastronomy.org](http://amateurastronomy.org)) or call 905-627-4323. The club offers a basic astronomy course for members.

*Mario Carr, the author of this report, is the club's director of publicity and can be reached at [mario-carr@cogeco.ca](mailto:mario-carr@cogeco.ca) or on Twitter (@MarioCCarr).*

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