

# Halton sees a spike in number of chlamydia and flu cases

Region attributes increase to improved screening

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Cases of the sexually-transmitted disease (STD) chlamydia continues to increase in Halton, according to a Halton Region Health Department report discussed at Halton Region's Health and Social Services Committee meeting last Tuesday (July 5). The treatable disease, which can make it dif-

icult for a woman to get pregnant if left untreated, was the most frequently reported infectious disease in 2015, with 916 cases compared to the 2010-2014 average of 799 cases. The trend is consistent with the general rise in chlamydia rates seen in Ontario over the past 10 years. However, incidences of chlamydia in Halton continue to be significantly below the provincial rate. The report states some of the increased rate

may be attributed to improved screening and testing methods, which have become more accurate.

The second most frequently reported infectious disease in Halton was influenza, with a reported 398 cases in 2015, compared to the 2010-2014 average of 242.

The report also highlights a hike in gonorrhoea, an STD that can cause very serious complications when not treated but that can be cured with the right medication.

"While rates of influenza tend to fluctuate from year to year, depending on the sub-type or strain of the influenza viruses, and on vaccine match, rates of chlamydia and gonorrhoea have been increasing more steadily in recent years," the report details.

"The age-standardized incident rate of chlamydia increased in Halton by 38 per cent between 2006 and 2015."

There were 117 reported cases of gonorrhoea in Halton, compared to the previous five-year annual average of 79 cases, the report said.

Public Health Ontario continues to monitor and investigate the provincial increase in gonorrhoea cases and is examining antibiotic sensitivity and adherence to treatment and testing guidelines, according to the report. It's also evaluating Ontario's treatment guidelines.

During discussion on the report, Halton **21**

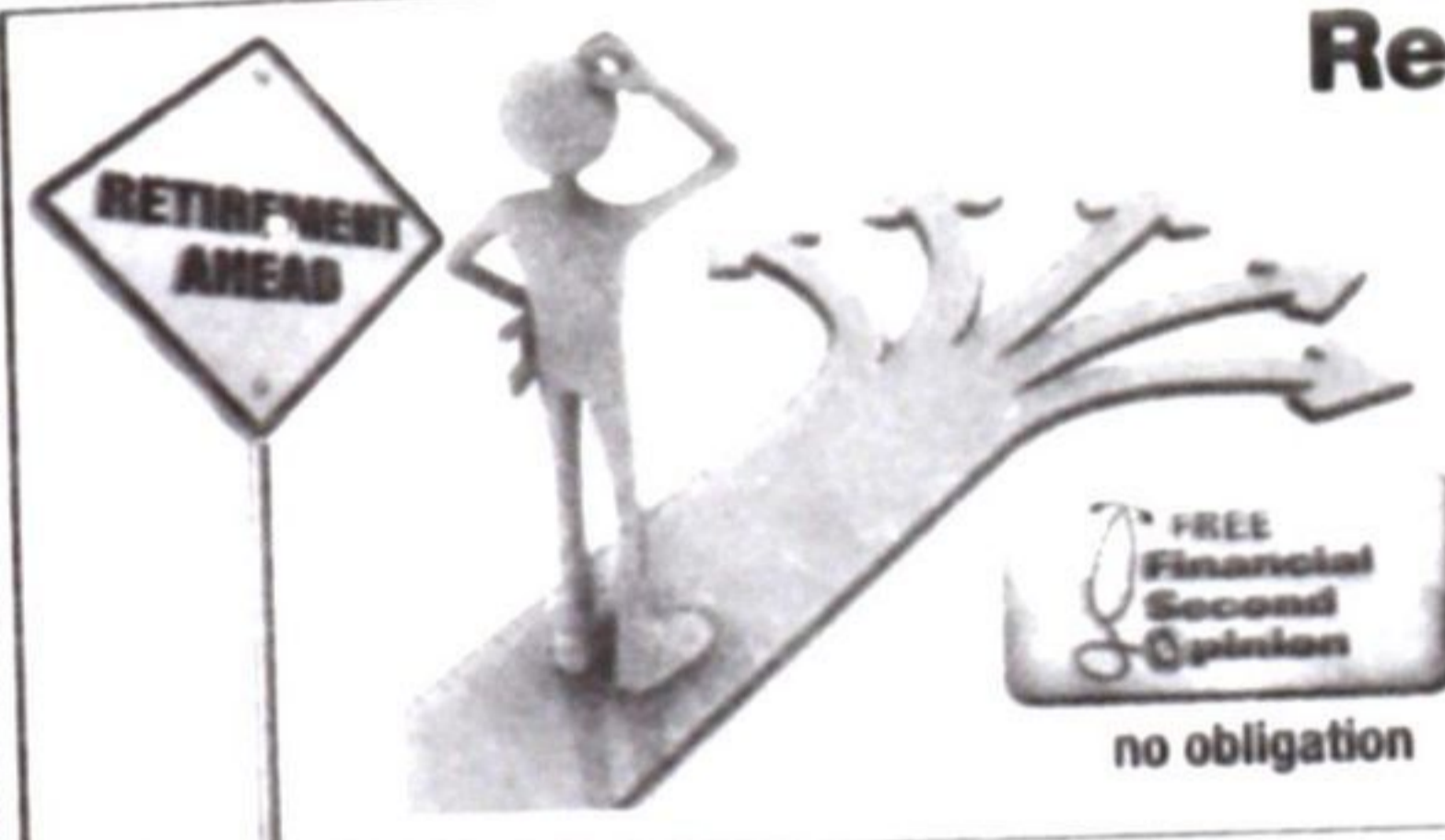
## Beware of ticks

Halton residents are being reminded to protect themselves from Lyme disease, a bacterial infection spread by the black-legged tick. While the risk of tick-borne diseases in Halton Region is low, residents can still contract the disease, particularly in risk areas.

### Risk areas

Residents engaging in outdoor activities in wooded, brush or tall grass areas and especially those travelling to areas of known risk for Lyme disease such as Long Point Provincial Park, Pinery Provincial Park, Point Pelee Provincial Park, Rondeau Provincial Park, Rouge Valley, Turkey Point Provincial Park, Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area, Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area and St. Lawrence Islands National Park are being advised to visit [halton.ca/Lymedisease](http://halton.ca/Lymedisease) to learn how to prevent tick bites.

Ticks can be removed with fine-tip tweezers and sent to the Health Department's submit-a-tick program for testing and identification. Residents should also contact their physician if they develop a rash or other symptoms such as muscle aches, fever or headache.



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