



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2023035

DATE: 28 April 2023

RE: Lyme Disease Awareness Month proclaimed in Amherst

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – May has been proclaimed Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the Town of Amherst.

“Lyme disease is a serious illness,” Mayor David Kogon said on April 28, 2023, as he signed the proclamation on behalf of the Amherst town council.

“As such, I urge all resident of Amherst to educate themselves about this disease and to learn about Lyme disease prevention.”

The proclamation noted Lyme disease is caused by the bite of a black-legged tick that is infected with the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue and a skin rash called erythema migrans.

Donna Lugar, founder of the N.S. Lyme Support Group and a member of the N.S. Lyme Advocacy Group, welcomed the town’s proclamation.



COUNCILLORS HAL DAVIDSON, CHARLIE CHAMBERS AND GEORGE BAKER, ALONG WITH CAO JASON MACDONALD, WERE ON HAND TO WATCH MAYOR DAVID KOGON SIGN A PROCLAMATION PROCLAIMING MAY TO BE LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH IN THE TOWN OF AMHERST. (TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)





“We appreciate the town’s assistance in ensuring residents are aware that disease-carrying ticks can be found anywhere in the province of Nova Scotia, including golf courses, yards, parks, on your pets and even in the long grass adjoining many beaches,” Lugar said. “As such, the entire province of Nova Scotia is considered at risk for Lyme disease.”

The [Notifiable Diseases in Nova Scotia 2020 and 2021 Surveillance Report](#), which was recently released by the province, indicates the reported confirmed/probable cases of Lyme disease in 2020 was 445 and 594 in 2021.

“Those numbers are down when compared to 2019, when 837 confirmed or probable cases were reported,” Lugar said. “However, we believe this is mostly due to COVID-19, as the restrictions in place at the time kept many people from exploring nature. It could also be because many people did not go to hospitals after a known tick bite. Unfortunately, this probably means many people that were bitten have not received the proper diagnosis and treatment and are suffering long-term ramifications.”

Lugar noted the N.S. Lyme Advocacy Group, in an [open letter to all Nova Scotians](#), indicated:

- There is an urgent need for a Lyme clinic in Nova Scotia that is dedicated to complex Lyme and tick-borne diseases similar to the Tick Collaborative Care Service established in Manitoba to reduce the cost of misdiagnosis and delayed diagnoses;
- A need to provide health-care providers with accurate, up-to-date education on tick-borne diseases so they can be recognized and treated during all stages of the disease;
- A need for a non-partisan Lyme Disease Taskforce that includes representation by those with lived experience of tick-borne diseases.

“Nova Scotians must understand that ticks, in all areas of Nova Scotia, can potentially be carrying disease(s) ... that can cause more than a rash and flu-like symptoms,” the letter states. “If not diagnosed and treated quickly, symptoms can multiply and become debilitating, and can cause death in some instances.”

Lugar stressed that “prevention is the key to fighting the disease.”





“This includes undertaking daily preventative measures, such as regular tick checks and ensuring the proper removal of any attached ticks,” she said. “The federal government has a good tick removal video that is worth watching before you find a tick. It can be found at: [Lyme disease video: How to properly remove a tick - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/diseases/lyme-disease/how-to-properly-remove-a-tick.html).

“Ticks are not going anywhere, so we have to learn to live with them, rather than fear them, as getting outside is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Make preventative measures part of your regular routine, just as you would sun screen.”

As part of the town’s efforts to make people aware of Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Victoria Square will be lit up in green from May 1 to May 11, 2023.

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