



Lakeridge Health

Spring 2026

## Rashes of Concern – Contagious Diseases Associated with Rashes

It is important to keep on top of any new onset of unexplained rashes on both your staff and residents/clients.

Some rashes are infectious and if there are new onset and/or unexplained rashes, please refer your resident/client to get assessed by a health care provider for diagnosis.

Utilize your point of care risk assessment (PCRA) for any direct contact with rashes and wear the appropriate PPE to help prevent transmission to yourself as well as to other residents/clients.

Rashes that are transmitted by the airborne route which includes both Chickenpox (Varicella) and Measles should be managed appropriately as there is high risk for complication and severity to those non-immune, and unvaccinated individuals. These require special isolation protocols and additional follow up for any exposures would be required by Durham Region Public Health.



**The measles outbreak in Ontario has been declared over as of October 7, 2025, however on March 6, 2026, Durham Region received confirmation of measles cases. To date for 2026, Durham Region has four confirmed case of measles.** As Measles continues to circulate both in Canada and to other geographical areas, there is still a continued risk of transmission especially amongst those who are unvaccinated. It is important to keep up to date with vaccine preventable diseases like Measles and Chicken pox (Varicella) for prevention.

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Infectious Rashes	Symptoms	How is it Transmitted	IPAC Management	Prevention
Scabies	Itchy, pimple-like rash caused by mites burrowing into the skin. In severe cases, rashes can be crusted	Contact	Contact precautions until 24 hours after completion of treatment	Hand Hygiene
Impetigo (bacterial infection)	Red sores usually around the nose and mouth that form a golden crust	Contact	Contact precautions until 24 hours of effective antibiotic treatment	Hand hygiene
Hand-foot-and-Mouth disease	Sores in mouth and rash on hands, feet and buttocks, mostly in children	Contact	Routine practices	Hand Hygiene
Chickenpox (Varicella)	Red bumps, blisters and crusted scabs in various stages over the entire body	Airborne	Negative pressure room (if available)  OR  Single room with door closed. Add HEPA unit and/or look for opportunities to open windows or turn on bathroom exhaust	Varicella Vaccination
Measles	Red/pink rash that spreads from the face and ears	Airborne		Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccination
Shingles (Herpes Zoster)	Painful blisters, clustered rash that can be localized  In severe cases, the rash can spread to multiple areas of the body	Contact (if localized and can be covered)  OR  Airborne (if located on the whole body)		Shingles vaccination

# Construction, Renovation, Maintenance & Design: The Role of IPAC



As we transition from winter into spring, many health care and congregate living settings begin planning maintenance projects, renovations, and infrastructure improvements. While these activities are important for maintaining safe and functional environments, they can also introduce infection prevention and control (IPAC) risks if not properly managed.

Construction, renovation, maintenance, and design activities often referred to as CRMD can disturb dust, release environmental organisms, and alter airflow patterns. These factors may increase the risk of exposure to microorganisms for residents, staff, and visitors if appropriate precautions are not in place. For this reason, early and ongoing involvement of IPAC is essential throughout the entire project lifecycle.

IPAC professionals play an important role in supporting organizations during all phases of CRMD work, including:

**Planning** - Identifying potential infection risks and conducting an Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA)

**Work/Construction** - Ensuring appropriate containment, traffic flow management, environmental cleaning, and protective measures are in place

**Commissioning** - Verifying that the space is safe for occupancy before reopening or use

Integrating IPAC considerations early helps reduce the risk of health care-associated infections and ensures that construction activities are carried out safely while protecting vulnerable populations.

To support organizations in managing CRMD activities, Public Health Ontario (PHO) has developed a collection of practical tools and resources, including:

- Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) tools
- Planning and commissioning checklists
- Hoarding and containment guidance
- Traffic flow and environmental cleaning considerations
- Presentations outlining the role of IPAC during construction projects

These resources can be adapted to support facilities in planning and managing construction or maintenance work while maintaining strong infection prevention practices.

As construction and maintenance activities increase during the warmer months, the Durham IPAC Hub encourages organizations to review these resources and engage IPAC early in project planning to help ensure safe environments for residents, staff, and visitors.



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## Need Support?

If your facility is planning or currently undergoing construction, renovation, maintenance, or design projects, the Durham IPAC Hub is available to provide guidance and support. Early collaboration with IPAC can help identify potential risks and ensure appropriate infection prevention measures are incorporated throughout the project.

Please feel free to **reach out to the Durham IPAC Hub team for consultation or support** during the planning or implementation of these activities.

For more information and access, please visit [PHO CRMD](#) and [PHO](#).



## We welcome your ideas & suggestions!

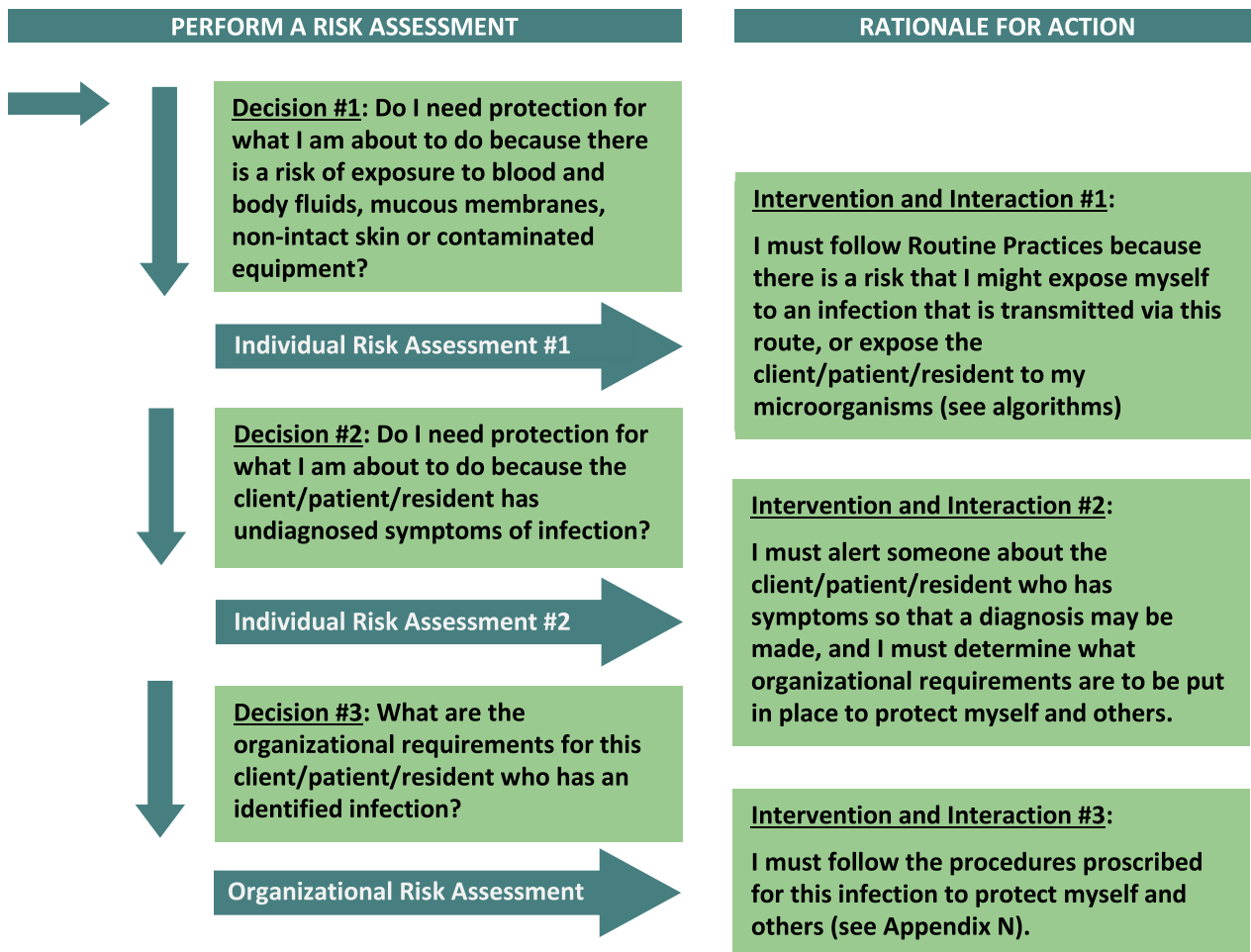
We welcome any suggestions that you may have for future article topics or ideas and any comments you have to improve the newsletter! Please submit comments by email to [malexander@lh.ca](mailto:malexander@lh.ca) or [email Durham Region Health Department \(DRHD\)](#).



# Performing a Risk Assessment Related to Routine Practices and Additional Precautions

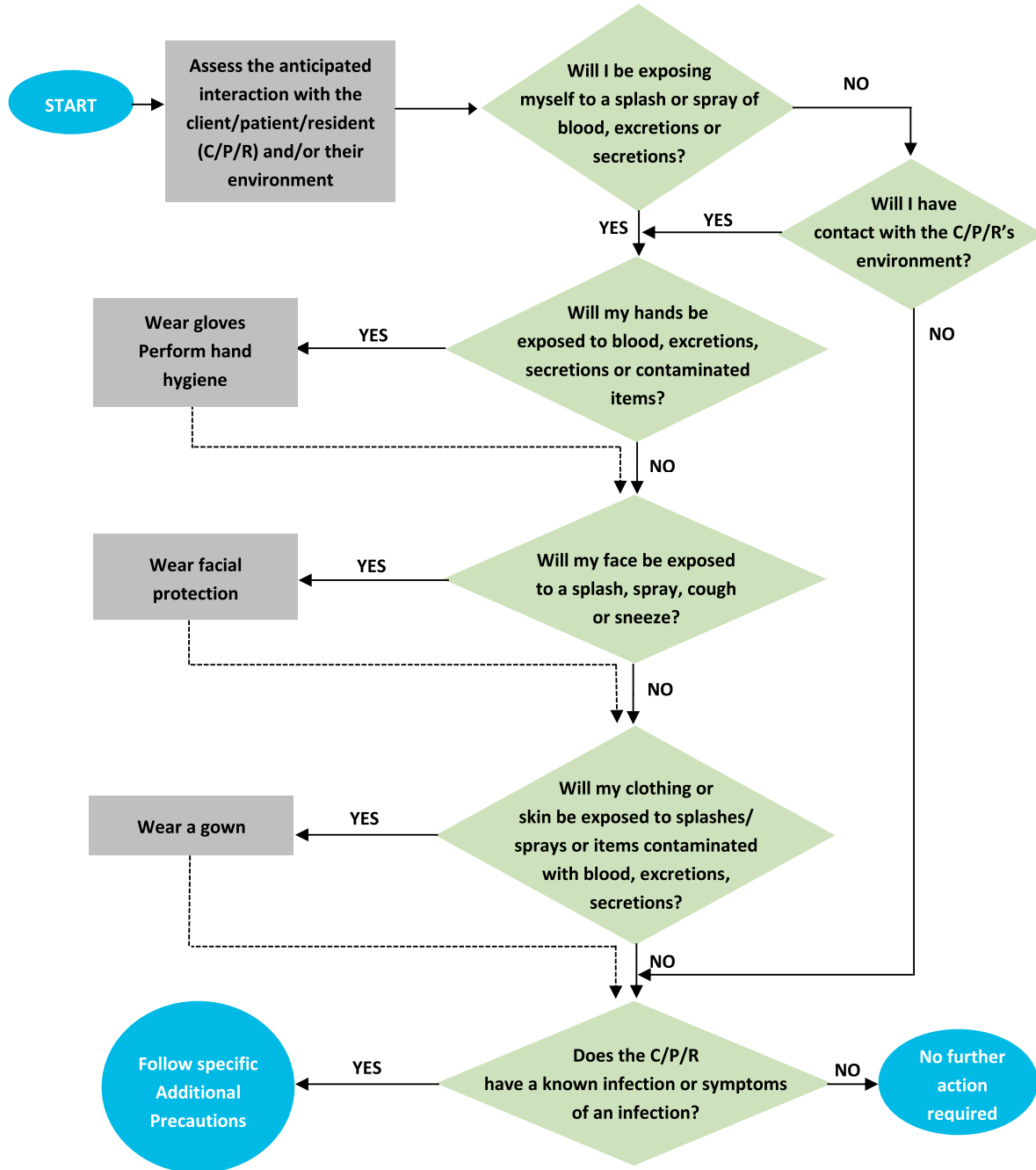
An individual assessment of each client/patient/resident’s potential risk of transmission of microorganisms must be made by all health care providers and other staff who come into contact with them. Based on that risk assessment and a risk assessment of the task, one may determine appropriate intervention and interaction strategies, such as hand hygiene, waste management, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and client/patient/resident placement, that will reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms to and from the individual.<sup>28</sup> When a client/patient/resident has undiagnosed symptoms or signs of an infection, interventions must be informed by organizational requirements.

## Risk assessment steps to be performed by a Health Care Provider to determine an individual’s risk of transmission of infectious agents and the rationale for associated protective measures



For more information please contact Public Health Ontario’s Infection Prevention and Control Department at [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca) or visit [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca)

### Routine Practices Risk Assessment Algorithm for All Client/Patient/Resident Interactions



For more information please contact Public Health Ontario's Infection Prevention and Control Department at [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca) or visit [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca)

# News from Public Health Ontario Lab - Specimen Collection Material Ordering Update Effective April 1, 2026

Public Health Ontario (PHO) is updating how they provide specimen collection materials for clinical laboratory testing. These changes will help PHO continue delivering high-quality microbiological testing services by streamlining and focusing our laboratory offerings.

## What's Changing?

- Primary care clients/clinics - PHO will communicate to existing primary care clients and may continue to order specimen collection materials for an additional six-month transition period (until **September 30, 2026**) if they self-identify as experiencing challenges in securing alternative supply arrangements. This extension is intended to provide impacted practices with additional time to finalize and implement sustainable solutions while avoiding any potential disruption to patient care.
- Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes - PHO will continue to provide specimen collection materials and laboratory testing to support ongoing outbreak preparedness, as well as for homes with suspected or confirmed outbreaks. Testing will continue to support timely and effective outbreak management. Homes must complete all required fields in the updated Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies and submit the form to their nearest PHO laboratory. Use of an outdated requisition may result in processing delays or cancellation of the order. [A reference list of suppliers and vendors](#) is available to help you identify potential sources for these or similar materials.

**Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario**  
**AT A GLANCE**  
**Suppliers and Vendors for Specimen Collection Materials**  
 Updated: February 24, 2026

The following list of suppliers and vendors for specimen collection materials is being provided for reference only to support health care providers and clinics in sourcing supplies that will no longer be provided by Public Health Ontario (PHO) as of April 1, 2026. PHO does not recommend, endorse, or guarantee any supplier, vendor or product. You should review your own clinical, business and procurement requirements before selecting a vendor.

**Table 1: Organized by Name on PHO Requisition**

Name on PHO Requisition	Kits	Components	Catalogue Number	Supplier	Vendor
Syphilis PCR Item#390047	Universal Transport Media (UTM) and swab	UTM 5ML w/Reg Nylon FLOCSwab	CA306CF	Copan	Micronostyx
Enteric Outbreak Kit Item#380036	2 vials: Green-Enteric Bacteriology / Protozoa PCR testing and White-Virology / Toxin	Enteric Transport media w Spork	BM35ET	Technologist Choice™	Bio-Media
PARA Item#390033	Enteric Parasitology Microscopy (SAF)	Fecal Container with White Spoon Cap	URC-026B	Technologist Choice™	Bio Nuclear
		SAF Fixative, 15ml Vial	SAF-120	Nutri-Bact Inc.	Tekniscience Inc

The following specialized testing kits will remain available from PHO (with order numbers):

- Bordetella Pertussis kits ([390052](#))
- Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* NAA testing kits (300316 and 300317)
- Gastric lavage collection kits for hospital clients only ([390043](#))

You can order these specialized kits by completing the [Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies](#) and submit it to your nearest PHO laboratory. Be sure to bookmark and download the latest version for each order. Printed requisitions will no longer be provided.

Collection kits for outbreak investigations should be coordinated through the local public health unit.

## Exempted Clients

There are some exemptions to these updates, which include public health units (and clinics operated by health units) as well as certain specialized clinics and organizations.

PHO will continue to provide specimen collection supplies directly to the listed facilities/groups below settings beyond **April 1, 2026**, to support outbreak response, remote communities, and specialized services:

- Public health units (including PHU-operated clinics)
- Northern nursing stations
- Correctional facilities
- Indigenous-led clinics and health organizations (e.g., Indigenous Health Authorities and Indigenous-led elder care organizations)
- Ontario Forensic Pathology Service

If you have received confirmation that your organization is exempt from this change, you can continue ordering specimen collection materials from PHO as usual. The [Requisition for Specimen Containers and Supplies](#) will be updated effective April 1, 2026, but the ordering process remains the same. Please ensure you always use the most current version by bookmarking and downloading the latest version for each order.

## Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact PHO's Laboratory Customer Service Centre

- Phone: 1-877-604-4567 (Mon–Fri: 7:30 a.m.–7:00 p.m.; Sat: 8:00 a.m.–3:45 p.m.)
- Email: [customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca](mailto:customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca)



# Smoking and Your Health



Smoking increases the risk of chronic diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and increased risk of cancer. Quitting smoking has health benefits for people of all ages. It lowers your risk for diseases caused by smoking.

## Everyone has their own reasons for smoking. You may:

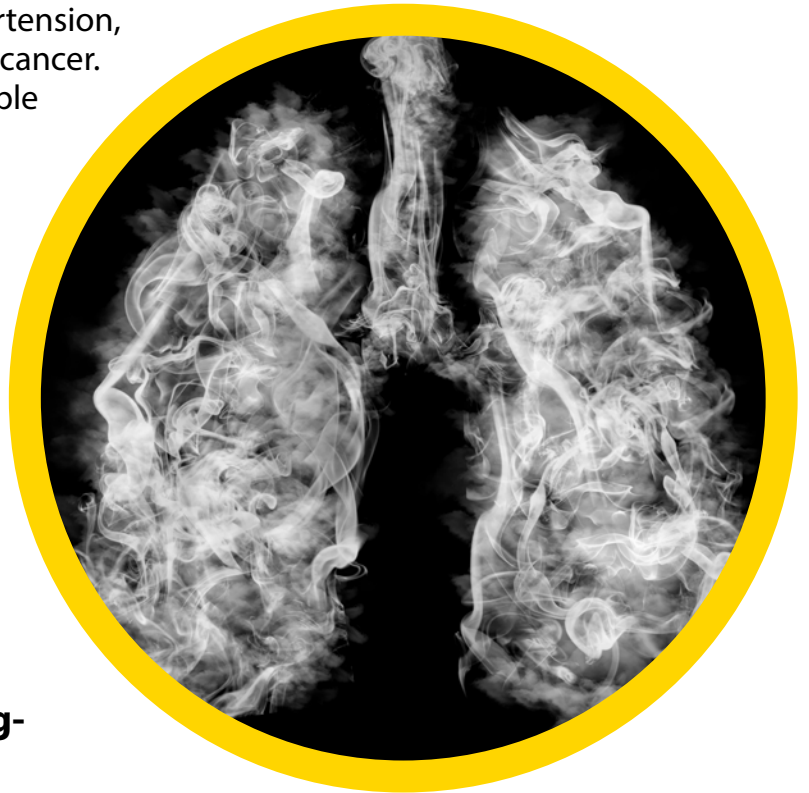
- smoke because of a habit or addiction, or both.
- like how it makes you look or feel.
- feel like it helps you relax or boosts your energy.
- think it gives you time to yourself.
- feel smoking helps you control your weight.
- use socially with others.

## Quitting smoking has short- and long-term benefits to your health:

- within 20 minutes of quitting blood pressure decreases; your pulse returns to normal.
- after eight hours carbon monoxide levels decrease in your body.
- after 24 hours, your chances of having a heart attack decrease.
- after 48 hours, your sense of smell and taste will improve.
- after four days, your lung capacity will increase.
- within two weeks to three months, your blood circulation will increase.
- in one to nine months your coughing, fatigue and shortness of breath will decrease.
- after one year, your risk of having a heart attack is cut in half.

## Quitting smoking means:

- you will not have yellow stains on fingers and teeth.
- you will stop smelling like smoke and will stop having smoker's breath.
- your skin tone and colour will improve.
- you will be less likely to get wrinkles around your mouth.



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## Outbreak Reporting Process/On-call After Hours Contact

It is important to remain vigilant with all public health measures as we prepare for a mix of respiratory & enteric outbreaks. A reminder to please continue masking, physical distancing when appropriate, frequently perform hand hygiene. Get COVID-19 primary doses and boosters when you are eligible and get your influenza vaccine when it is available.

To report outbreaks, during regular business hours Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. please call 1-800-841-2729 or 905-668-2020, or contact your public health inspector.

To report outbreak after hours, please call 1-800-372-1104, or 905-576-9991 and ask for the Public Health Inspector on-call.

Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation.

### Community support and resources:

- Call the [Durham Health Connection Line](#) to talk to a public health nurse for support with quitting.
- Receive support at [Durham Community Health Centre](#) from health care professionals with quitting smoking through support groups.
- [Pinewood Addiction Support Services \(PASS\)](#) offers community support for addictions. Residential Withdrawal Management Services (RWMS) offers short-term, residential support to individuals withdrawing from substances. The services are for people who are 18 and older. Located at 300 Centre Street South, Oshawa. Call 905-721-4747 or 1-888-881-8878 (toll free).
- [Smoke Free Connect](#) is a nationwide initiative supporting Canadian adults aged 18 and older who are interested in quitting commercial tobacco, especially those living in rural and remote communities. You can access tools, track progress, manage triggers, and connect with people who share your goals and your interests beyond smoking.



# Tick-Borne Illness in Ontario: Your Guide to Prevention

Since blacklegged ticks are moving into new areas across Ontario, it is more important than ever to know how to spot, treat, and prevent the illnesses they carry.

## Understanding Tick-Borne Illnesses

The most common concern in Ontario is **Lyme disease**.

- **Early signs:** appear between 3 and 30 days after a bite, a “bullseye” rash (called erythema migrans) usually appears. It is a red circle larger than 5 cm that expands over time. On darker skin, it might look like a bruise.
- **Other symptoms:** you might also feel like you have the flu, with a fever, chills, headaches, and tired muscles.
- **If untreated:** the infection can spread to your joints (causing swelling), your heart, or your nerves and can commonly cause facial droop or “Bell’s palsy”.

Other rarer illnesses include **Anaplasmosis, Powassan virus** and **Babesiosis**. These are mostly found in Eastern Ontario and cause high fevers, severe headaches, and sometimes even organ failure if not treated quickly.

## How to Prevent Bites

The best way to stay safe is to avoid being bitten in the first place. Ticks love tall grass and wooded areas.

- **Dress for Defense:** wear light-colored clothing so you can spot ticks easily. Tuck your pants into your socks and wear long sleeves.
- **Use Repellent:** use bug sprays that contain **DEET** on your skin. You can also treat your gear with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact.
- **The 10-Minute Rule:** when you come inside, put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any hidden ticks.
- **Tick Checks:** Check your whole body, especially “hidden” spots like your armpits, behind your knees, and in your hair. Showering within two hours of being outside also helps wash off unattached ticks.



## What to Do if You Are Bitten

If you find a tick attached to you, don’t panic. It usually takes **24 to 48 hours** of attachment for a tick to pass on Lyme disease.

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## Safe Removal

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers.
2. Grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible.
3. Pull straight upward with steady pressure. Do not twist, squeeze or try to burn it off.
4. Clean the area with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.

## When to See a Physician

In some cases, a physician might give you a single dose of an antibiotic (doxycycline) to prevent Lyme disease. This is called Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

You should ask about this if:

- the tick is definitely a blacklegged tick.
- it was attached for at least 24 hours.
- you can start the medicine within 72 hours of removing the tick.

If you don't meet these rules, "wait and watch" for 30 days. If a rash or fever shows up, see a healthcare provider right away.

You may also visit [Durham/ca/lyme-diseases](https://www.durham.ca/lyme-diseases), for more information including a video to learn how to properly remove a tick.

You may also visit [E.tick.ca](https://www.tick.ca), this is a platform for image-based identification and population monitoring for ticks in Canada.



### Tick Safety 101: Preventing and Responding to Lyme Disease

Blacklegged ticks (deer ticks) are small, hard-to-see parasites that can transmit Lyme disease and other infections. Safety relies on a two-part process: preventing attachment and responding correctly to a bite.

#### Dress for Defense

Wear light-colored clothing with long sleeves and pants tucked into socks to spot ticks easily.

#### Use Proven Repellents

Apply bug sprays containing DEET or Icaridin (Picaridin) to skin and permethrin to clothing.

#### Perform a "Tick Check"

Shower within two hours of being outdoors and check high-risk areas like armpits and behind knees.

#### PHASE 2: REMOVAL AND MEDICAL ACTION

#### Remove Ticks Safely

Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick close to the skin and pull straight out.

#### Watch for the "Bull's-eye"

Seek medical help if an expanding, red, circular rash (erythema migrans) or fever appears.

#### The 24-Hour Window

Lyme transmission usually requires the tick to be attached for at least 24 hours.

Medical Action Criteria: Preventative Antibiotics (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)			
Requirement	Threshold		
Identification	<b>Identification</b>  Must be an Ixodes spp. (Blacklegged) tick	<b>Attachment Time</b>  Attached for 24 hours or more	<b>Treatment Window</b>  Antibiotics must be started within 72 hours of removal

© NotebookLM



## Durham Region Health Department FAX about...

For Health Care Professionals



# Potassium Iodide (KI) pills in Durham

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission requires that all homes and businesses within 10-kilometres of a nuclear generating station receive a supply of potassium iodide (KI) pills. KI is a stable iodine salt, effective in reducing the risk of thyroid cancer in the highly unlikely event of a radioactive iodine release.

Ontario Power Generation (OPG), in partnership with Durham Region Health Department and Toronto Emergency Management, will provide **residents living within 10 kilometres** of the Pickering and Darlington nuclear generating stations with replacement KI pills. These will replace those distributed in 2015, which are set to expire in 2027. Residents will receive a KI package by mail at their home address this year. Residents should keep their existing stock until the replacement pills are received.

**Residents living within 10 to 50 kilometres** of the nuclear generating stations should check the expiry date on their current KI supply and order replacements through [preparetobesafe.ca](https://preparetobesafe.ca) before their pills expire.

OPG has contracted a new supplier, *New Roots Herbal*, for KI pill distribution. *Radblock* is distributed through [preparetobesafe.ca](https://preparetobesafe.ca) online orders. Although boxes and manufacturers may vary, each pill contains 65 mg of KI.

In the highly unlikely event of a nuclear emergency that results in the release of radiation to the public, the **Chief Medical Officer of Health** for Ontario will provide **instructions** on where, when, how, and by whom KI tablets should be taken.

**As a health care provider, thank you for partnering with us to help raise awareness about KI:**

- **Advise your clients/patients** who live or work within 10 to 50 km of a nuclear generating station that they can obtain **FREE** KI tablets from [preparetobesafe.ca](https://preparetobesafe.ca) or, they can call the Durham Health Connection Line **905-668-2020 (or 1-800-841-2729)** for additional information about KI tablet distribution and assistance in ordering. [Preparetobesafe.ca](https://preparetobesafe.ca) uses postal codes to determine if an address falls within the eligible zone.
- **Stay informed** by visiting [durham.ca/KI](https://durham.ca/KI) or [preparetobesafe.ca](https://preparetobesafe.ca) (e.g., what KI is, dosage, how it works, when to take, how to store it, etc.).
- **Order KI pamphlets** to keep in your waiting room for the public to take. Order pamphlets online at [durham.ca/HCP](https://durham.ca/HCP).

March 9, 2026

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.





## Reminder

Update your contact information, there may be an urgent message that Durham Region Health Department will have to send to all our partners. A current contact list will help us distribute the information to you more efficiently. If your facility has had any changes to contacts, such as IPAC leads, director, administrator, managers, supervisors, etc., please forward the new contact information to your public health inspector to update the list or send [email](#).

## Email Alert

- [outbreakreports@durham.ca](mailto:outbreakreports@durham.ca) - provides a list of active institutional outbreaks
- [healthprotectionIDPC@durham.ca](mailto:healthprotectionIDPC@durham.ca) - provides information and resources on infectious disease prevention and control

Please add these two emails to your contact list to prevent important messaging from going to your spam folder.



## Do you need your CIC/LTC-CIP?

Look to [IPAC Canada](#) to find the course that's right for you.



### Durham Region Health Department

Durham Health Connection Line

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

[durham.ca/health](http://durham.ca/health)

[durham.ca/hcp](http://durham.ca/hcp)



**Lakeridge  
Health**

### Lakeridge Health

IPAC Hub

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Michelle Alexander, Durham IPAC Hub Manager

905-242-7860

[lakeridgehealth.on.ca](http://lakeridgehealth.on.ca)

# E-NEWSLETTER