



**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

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### **Health Care Provider Advisory: Lyme Disease in Northwestern Ontario**

Northwestern Health Unit is advising health care providers in the region that there are a number of risk areas for Lyme disease within Northwestern Ontario.

Surveillance statistics from active tick dragging in Kenora and Rainy River areas from 2018 indicate that the proportion of ticks that are positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (the bacterium that causes Lyme disease) is **greater than 20%**. At this level of prevalence in ticks, chemoprophylaxis is recommended under specific circumstances.

Patients that meet the following criteria can be considered for chemoprophylaxis to prevent Lyme disease according to ISDA guidelines:

- A Blacklegged tick is attached for more than 24 hours **AND**
- The tick was acquired in a risk area with more than 20% infected ticks (this includes the risk areas of NWHU) **AND**
- It has been less than 72 hours since the tick was removed **AND**
- There are no contraindications for doxycycline; for example, doxycycline cannot be used in pregnancy and in children under the age of 8 (for these groups, chemoprophylaxis is not an option, and observation for clinical signs and symptoms is indicated).

### **Links to helpful resources:**

- [Clinical Guidance Document from Health Quality Ontario](#)
- [Provincial map showing risk areas for Lyme disease and recent surveillance results related to vector borne diseases](#)
- [Northwestern Health Unit's information for health care providers and recorded webinars](#)

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