



# *Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners*

## Health and Safety

### *Anaplasmosis*

Updated: September 11, 2015

#### **Issue: Public Health Risk - Anaplasmosis**

#### **Background to the Issue:**

- Blacklegged ticks (sometimes called deer ticks) are now commonly found in the southeast corner of Manitoba. Birds are the main carriers of these ticks and they have been found as far north as the mid-Interlake area in Manitoba.
- Anaplasmosis is a blood-borne infection transmitted from infected blacklegged ticks (sometimes called deer ticks) to humans.
- Blacklegged ticks can be found between April and November.
- These ticks are about the size of a pin-head (smaller than the common wood tick). Wood ticks are 1 to 2 mm in diameter and do not transmit Anaplasmosis.
- Anaplasmosis, otherwise known as *Ehrlichiosis*, is caused by a rickettsial parasite that enters red blood cells and results in their destruction.
- Anaplasmosis has been detected in Wisconsin for some time and is now known to occur in Minnesota, and a single case in a man was diagnosed in Calgary in 2009. This person appeared to have picked up the infected tick in the local Calgary area.

#### **Cautionary Notes:**

- Symptoms; initially – fever over 102° F (over 40° C)
- Symptoms; also include headache, stiff neck, muscle aches or fatigue. It may be difficult to diagnose because symptoms are similar to other diseases.
- The disease is best treated with antibiotics (tetracyclines) in the early stages.
- Tell your doctor if you had a tick bite; ask your veterinarian to blood test your dogs if there have been tiny ticks found on them.
- Ask your doctor for a complete blood analysis with blood chemistry. In an early case there will be leucopenia/lymphopenia and thrombocytopenia with elevated transaminases.
- The bite of the tick in these cases **does not result in a “bulls-eye rash”**.

***Policy or Program Implications:  
for this issue?***

***What is current Policy or Program***

- Reduce contact with blacklegged (deer) ticks by:
  - avoiding tick-invested areas whenever possible;
  - wear light-coloured clothing to make it easier to see ticks on you;
  - wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts where ticks are commonly found;
  - inspect yourself, children and pets for ticks and removing them as soon as possible;
  - Keep grass well mowed to help reduce habitat suitable for ticks.
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- Reduce risk by removing tick early as soon as they are observed. Carefully remove it with a good quality tweezers. Grasp the tick close to the skin and pull slowly upward with steady pressure.
- Avoid twisting or crushing the tick.
- Clean the skin round the bite with soap and water or a disinfectant.
- Save the tick in a plastic pill bottle for later identification.
- Mark date and location of the bite on your calendar.
- Submit the tick to: Entomology Dept., Univ. Of Manitoba, Attn: Dr. Galloway.

***Action Taken by MACO:***

- Advise cottagers to keep informed regarding this emerging public health risk.

***MACO's Recommendations for the Future:***

- Seek updated information about Anaplasmosis on these websites:  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/anaplasmosis/basics.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/anaplasmosis/basics.html)  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/hga.html>

***Position of MACO***

- Advise cottagers to take precautions when frequenting tick prone areas.
- Take precautions when possible and indicated by location.
- Follow recommendations of health officials.