Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
286 Water Street
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel: (207) 287-8016; Fax (207) 287-9058
TTY Users: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Health Care Providers
From: Dr. Isaac Benowitz, State Epidemiologist
Subject: **2025 Fall Tick Season**
Date / Time: Friday, October 17, 2025, at 11:15AM
Priority: Normal
Pages: 2
Message ID: 2025PHADV031

Tickborne Illnesses in Maine Continue to Rise; Maine CDC Reminds Clinicians Consider Testing

The fall tick season in Maine is ramping up as adult deer ticks come out to feed. So far in 2025, case numbers of some human tickborne illnesses have surpassed incidence rates of earlier years. The purpose of this advisory is to remind health care providers to consider testing patients presenting with possible tickborne disease at any time of the year, including this fall and winter when deer ticks are active.

As of October 15, 2025, the Maine CDC recorded 3,569 cases of Lyme disease, 1,255 cases of anaplasmosis, 324 cases of babesiosis, 26 cases of hard tick relapsing fever (HTRF) and 1 case of Powassan. Rates of anaplasmosis, babesiosis, HTRF and Lyme disease in Maine are higher than they were in October of last year. This year Maine also reported 2 cases of tularemia, 1 case of spotted fever rickettsiosis (SFR), and 1 case of ehrlichiosis.

The deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) is the primary vector of most tickborne diseases reported in Maine. It can be active at any temperature above freezing. Deer ticks can carry the pathogens that cause anaplasmosis, babesiosis, HTRF, Lyme disease, and Powassan. The Maine CDC considers these pathogens endemic in Maine. Individuals bitten by a deer tick can acquire more than one infection simultaneously. Most people infected with these pathogens have mild or no symptoms, but infections can be serious and even fatal.

Symptoms
The most common early symptoms of tickborne diseases occur within 30 days after a tick bite. Some of these non-specific symptoms are similar to the symptoms of COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory infections.

Symptoms of tickborne diseases of concern in Maine include:

- Anaplasmosis: fever, headache, malaise, and body aches.
- Babesiosis: extreme fatigue, aches, fever, chills, sweating, dark urine, and anemia.

- HTRF: fever, chills, headache, body and joint pain, and fatigue.
- Lyme disease: fever, headache, joint pain, muscle pain, and *erythema migrans* rash.
- Powassan: fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, seizures, encephalitis, and meningitis.

What to do after a tick bite

- Remove the tick properly using tweezers or a tick spoon.
- Clean the area around the bite.
- Instruct the patient to watch for signs and symptoms for 30 days.
- Identify the tick and the engorgement level (the amount of time the tick was attached).

Testing

Preferred testing for Lyme disease is a two-tier test, but PCR is also available. Preferred testing for anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and HTRF is by PCR. Babesiosis can also be confirmed by blood smear. Clinicians using serological testing should collect acute and convalescent phase samples. All the above tests are available at commercial labs. Preferred testing for Powassan is by serological IgM and PRNT, but PCR is also available. Clinicians can refer to the Arboviral Testing in Maine guidance for more information on arboviral testing.

Treatment

Most tickborne diseases in Maine are treatable, and most patients recover after receiving appropriate therapy. Untreated infections can lead to serious rheumatologic, cardiac, and neurologic manifestations like Lyme carditis and meningoencephalitis. Refer to IDSA treatment guidelines and the tickborne reference manual for clinicians. Treatment for Powassan is supportive.

For more information on **prophylaxis** and **tick identification and testing**, refer to the 2025 Lyme and Other Tickborne Disease Information (May 19, 2025) health advisory.

Reporting

Anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, HTRF, Lyme disease, Powassan, SFR, and tularemia are all reportable in Maine (State of Maine Control of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Rule).

Data

Case counts for anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Lyme disease are available on the Maine Tracking Network Near Real-Time Dashboard (updated weekly) and case counts for all reportable tickborne diseases are available on the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Dashboard (updated monthly).

Additional Information

- Maine CDC tickborne diseases: www.maine.gov/dhhs/vectorborne
- Maine Tracking Network data dashboard: data.mainepublichealth.gov/tracking/tickborne
- HETL forms: www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/services/maine-public-health-laboratory/clinical-microbiology/submitting-samples
- Reference manual for clinicians: www.cdc.gov/ticks/hcp/data-research/tickborne-disease-reference-guide
- IDSA treatment guidelines: www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/all-practice-guidelines
- University of Maine Tick Lab: extension.umaine.edu/ticks
- Maine CDC disease reporting and consultation line: **1-800-821-5821** (available 24/7)