

# MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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**\*\*ADVISORY – Important Information\*\***

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**TO:** Academic, Animal Care, CDC, Childcare, City and County Health Departments, Healthcare, Lab Facilities, County EMA Directors, Maine Medical Association, Public Health, EMS Regional Coordinators, Regional Resource Centers

**FROM:** Dr. Sheila Pinette, Maine CDC Director  
Dr. Stephen Sears, State Epidemiologist

**SUBJECT:** **Increase in Anaplasmosis – Maine, 2012**

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**PRIORITY:** **Medium**

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## Increase in Anaplasmosis – Maine, 2012

**Background:** Anaplasmosis is a bacterial infection that is carried by *Ixodes scapularis* (the deer tick), which is the same tick that also carries Lyme disease. Anaplasmosis is an emerging infection in Maine, and as of August 8, 2012, 38 cases have been reported to Maine CDC from 8 counties (Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Somerset and York). During 2011, a total of 26 cases were reported. Most infections occur during the summer and fall months, so the number of cases is expected to rise.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms of anaplasmosis include: fever, headache, malaise, body aches, cough, arthralgia, stiff neck and confusion. During the first week of clinical disease mild anemia, thrombocytopenia, leucopenia and modest elevations in hepatic transaminases are common. Anaplasmosis is treatable, and the majority of patients recover after receiving appropriate therapy.

### What to do after a tick bite:

- Remove the tick properly, ideally using tweezers or a tick spoon.
- Identify the tick and the engorgement level, or length in time of attachment. Tick identification is available through the Maine Medical Center Research Institute and more information can be found at <http://www.mmcri.org/home/webSubContent.php?list=webcontentlive&id=109&catID=4&subCatID=19>
- Clean the area around the bite, and instruct the patient to watch for signs and symptoms for 30 days.
- Testing of the tick is not routinely recommended.
- There is no data showing if prophylaxis is effective in preventing anaplasmosis.

### If anaplasmosis is suspected:

- PCR is the preferred method of testing, and is available through most commercial reference laboratories.
- Visualization of morulae in the cytoplasm of neutrophils or eosinophils is highly suggestive of anaplasmosis, but should be confirmed by laboratory testing.
- IDSA guidelines for assessment, treatment, and prevention of Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and babesiosis are available at <http://cid.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/9/1089.full>

### What to report:

Anaplasmosis is a reportable condition in the state of Maine. Report all positive labs diagnoses and smear positive suspect cases by fax at 1-800-293-7534 or by phone at 1-800-821-5821.

### Other tick borne diseases:

Other diseases that are carried by ticks in Maine include babesiosis and Lyme disease. Symptoms of babesiosis include: extreme fatigue, aches, fever, chills, sweating, dark urine, and possibly anemia. Preferred testing for babesiosis is by PCR. The most common early symptom of Lyme disease is an expanding red rash (erythema migrans) that occurs at the site of the tick bite within 3-30 days after being bitten. Fever, joint and muscle pains may also occur. Co-infections may occur with anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Lyme disease.

In 2011, providers reported 9 cases of babesiosis. Three cases have been reported to date in 2012. In 2011, providers reported 1,006 cases of Lyme disease. 483 cases have been reported to date in 2012. Anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever are all reportable in Maine.

A Physician's Reference Guide is available and describes the most common tick borne diseases in Maine. This guide can be found on our website at:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/index.shtml> under Resources. Paper copies can be requested through [disease.reporting@maine.gov](mailto:disease.reporting@maine.gov).

**Additional information:**

- For more information on tick borne diseases including anaplasmosis: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/index.shtml>
- To order tick educational materials: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/posters/order-form.shtml>
- Disease consultation and reporting available through Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821