

ANAPLASMOSIS

What is anaplasmosis?

Anaplasmosis is a tick-borne disease caused by the bacteria *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. It is mostly spread to humans through the bite of an infected tick.

Anaplasmosis may be transmitted by infected blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*), the same species of ticks that spreads Lyme Disease, and the western blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*) that is found in western North America. York Region is identified as a Lyme disease risk area where blacklegged ticks have been identified and people may come into contact with infected ticks.

Symptoms of anaplasmosis

- Fever
- Chills
- Severe headaches
- Muscle aches
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite

Symptoms of anaplasmosis typically appear from five to 21 days after the bite of an infected tick and on average last from seven to 14 days, with persistent symptoms lasting up to 60 days.

Rarely, anaplasmosis can lead to severe illnesses such as respiratory failure, bleeding problems, organ failure or death. Factors that increase the risk of severe illness include delayed treatment, old age and weakened immune system (due to cancer, AIDS, transplantation, or being on certain medications).

PUBLIC HEALTH

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How does anaplasmosis spread?

In Ontario, the bacteria are usually carried by infected blacklegged ticks, which are found on tall grasses and bushes in wooded areas almost anywhere in Ontario, including York Region.

Rarely, the bacteria can spread through blood transfusions, solid organ transplantation, direct contact with infected blood (human or animal), or inhaling aerosolized infected carcasses while butchering infected animals (e.g., deer carcasses).

Preventing anaplasmosis

<i>When outdoors</i>	<i>When indoors</i>
• Use insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin • Wear closed shoes and light-coloured, long sleeve shirts and long pants, and tuck pants into socks • Wear permethrin-treated clothing • Protect yourself when visiting wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter • Walk in the center of trails	• Check your body for ticks after spending time outdoors, paying close attention to areas such as the groin, scalp, underarms and back • Remove attached ticks from your and your pets' bodies as soon as possible • Check clothing and gear for ticks • Shower soon after being outdoors

Treating anaplasmosis

People who have experienced a tick bite and/or the symptoms listed above should contact their doctor to discuss possible treatment options.