

Improved testing protocol changes for early localized Lyme disease

Update to York Region health care professionals as of March 10, 2023

On April 1, 2023, the Public Health Ontario Lab (PHOL) will move to a different Lyme disease testing algorithm.

Higher sensitivity using modified two-tier testing (MTTT)

Currently, PHOL uses a standard two-tiered testing (STTT) algorithm to test for Lyme disease.

In early localized Lyme disease, the sensitivity of the STTT is low (29% to 40%). As a result, Lyme disease cannot confidently be ruled out with a negative test and a diagnosis of early localized Lyme disease must often be made based on clinical presentation, history of tick exposure and living in a Lyme disease risk area.

The new modified two-tier testing (MTTT) method provides 15% to 25% **higher sensitivity** during early localized Lyme disease and comparable sensitivity during early-disseminated and late-disseminated disease compared to STTT.

Implications for your practice

The changes in the testing algorithm will help support a clinical Lyme Disease diagnosis, particularly in the early localized stage of the disease (by reducing the chances of a false negative result) and help to improve the turnaround time for Lyme Disease testing, which can lead to earlier intervention.

For more information

Please refer to the attached Ministry of Health memorandum for more information.

PHOL will [post](#) the updated test information sheet and Lyme disease investigation tool kit before April 1, 2023. Please contact PHOL with technical questions about these testing changes at customerservicecentre@oahpp.ca or call 416-235.6556.

Note: Lyme disease is a disease of public health significance and is reportable to public health; please contact York Region's infectious diseases intake line at 1-877-464-9675, ext. 73588 to report.

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