

## **Nova Scotia Pharmacists Now Able to Prescribe Antibiotics for Prevention of Lyme Disease**

HALIFAX, August 16, 2021 – The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) has enabled pharmacists to prescribe an antibiotic for the prevention of Lyme disease. This new role is aimed at reducing pressure on emergency rooms and walk-in clinics across the province, as well as improving access to care as Nova Scotia experiences a rise in blacklegged ticks and Lyme disease. Nearly all counties in Nova Scotia are now considered to be high or moderate risk for Lyme disease.

“Enabling the public to receive care for Lyme disease from their local pharmacist means that Nova Scotians can now get prompt post-tick exposure healthcare right in their own community, helping to maximize our resources by keeping individuals out of emergency departments and walk-in clinics,” says Beverley Zwicker, CEO and Registrar of the NSCP. “Pharmacists have always been important sources of information and care for their communities and now are able to more fully support their patients by prescribing antibiotic treatment when it is appropriate to do so.”

Antibiotic prophylaxis is not generally indicated for all tick bites, and pharmacists will have a discussion with each patient to ensure that antibiotic prophylaxis is appropriate for them. If prescribed, public health guidelines in Nova Scotia are for a single dose of antibiotic. Screening will include whether the tick was a blacklegged tick, whether the tick bite occurred in the previous 72 hours and whether the tick was attached for at least 36 hours.

These criteria are important as not all ticks in Nova Scotia carry Lyme disease and it takes time for a tick to transmit the bacteria to a person once it has attached. Members of the public can submit photos of ticks through [eTick.ca](https://www.eTick.ca) for identification of the tick if they are unsure.

Taking steps to prevent tick bites in the first place, such as applying insect repellents, wearing light coloured clothing and closed shoes, and only walking on well-traveled paths to avoid high grass and vegetation, is important. The risk of contracting Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases increases the longer a tick is attached, so individuals are encouraged to routinely check for ticks and know how to promptly remove them if found.

Founded in 1876, the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) is the regulatory authority for the practice of pharmacy in Nova Scotia. Its legislated mandate is to maintain standards of practice and professional accountability in the practice of pharmacy, thereby supporting optimal patient care. The NSCP’s role is to regulate pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and the community pharmacies where they practice. To learn more about the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists and what we do to keep Nova Scotians safe, visit [nspharmacists.ca](https://www.nspharmacists.ca).

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For more information:

Beverley Zwicker, CEO and Registrar

[bzwicker@nspharmacists.ca](mailto:bzwicker@nspharmacists.ca)

902-422-8528 x 239