



# BOARD REPORT

Friday, April 24, 2009



Medical Officer of Health

## REPORT TO THE BOARD

Friday, April 24, 2009

### LYME DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION

There are several types of ticks in Grey Bruce. *Ixodes scapularis*, the deer or blacklegged tick, can carry and transmit the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Bb) which causes Lyme disease (LD). There is no evidence to date of established *Ixodes scapularis* tick populations in Grey Bruce. Only two blacklegged ticks have been submitted and identified in the past eight years and neither was found to carry Bb.

Migratory birds transport nymph and larva to new areas. Studies estimate as many as 150 million nymphs and larva may be deposited in Canada each summer; 30% of these will carry Bb. As climate change occurs, tick development and bacterial infection could become more established in Grey Bruce.

Surveillance measures will become more active this year. Public Health will request people submit ticks found on pets, other animals, and themselves for laboratory typing and testing. Local veterinarians will be encouraged to forward positive results from pet testing. If infected adult ticks are found in late summer or early fall, Public Health will implement a more active program of flagging for ticks and may conduct a small rodent serological survey. Public Health will increase local public awareness of personal protection from tick bites.

*Hazel Lynn*

# Program Report April 2009



101 17th Street East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 0A5  
**OWEN SOUND**  
519-376-9420

30 Park Street, P.O. Box 248, Walkerton, ON N0G 2V0  
**WALKERTON**  
519-881-1920

WEBSITE: [www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)

Program Report is issued on a monthly basis to inform our board and community partners of our activities.

*The highlighted programs are featured in this issue...*

## DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROMOTION: Maureen Handley

### Lynda Bumstead

Chronic Disease Prevention  
Early Detection of Cancer

### Sarah Ellis

Healthy Babies  
Healthy Children

### Carrie Griffith

Reproductive Health  
Dental Services  
Child Health

### Denna Leach

Sexual Health  
Injury Prevention  
Substance Abuse Prevention

### Linda Davies

Tobacco Projects  
Tobacco Control Act  
Tobacco By-law Enforcement

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## DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROTECTION: Chris Munn

### Karen Sweiger

Vaccine Preventable Diseases  
Rabies Control

### Andrew Barton

Food Safety  
Health Hazard Investigation  
Emergency Planning

### Lou D'Alessandro

Safe Water  
Environment

### Susan Shular

Control of Infectious Diseases  
Pandemic Planning  
Vector Borne Diseases  
Tuberculosis Control

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## TUBERCULOSIS: WORLD TB DAY

*World TB Day*, March 24, raises awareness that TB continues to be a serious global health challenge.

Tuberculosis is one of the world's leading causes of death from infectious diseases. Drug-resistant forms of TB are becoming endemic in parts of the world. This poses a serious threat and confirms the need to strengthen local TB surveillance and control initiatives.

In 2007, 1,547 cases of new and relapsed TB were reported in Canada (4.7 per 100,000 population). In 2008, the Grey Bruce Health Unit conducted 18 TB investigations. Five people started treatment for latent TB infection and one case of non-pulmonary TB was followed.

Ontario health units receive one-time funding to promote *World TB Day* and the importance of ongoing surveillance of active TB. The Grey Bruce Health Unit used this funding to distribute resource packages to area physicians and nurse practitioners. Packages contained a quick reference guide and the DVD produced by the Health Unit in 2008, demonstrating the correct procedure for administering and reading TB skin tests.

**I AM Stopping TB**

### **SEXUAL HEALTH PROGRAM COSTS INCREASING**

Pregnancy rates among 15-19 year olds in Grey Bruce have reduced 37% from 32 per 1000 in 1998 to 20 per 1000 in 2003. The availability of contraception and the increased awareness of the risks of unprotected sex could be factors contributing to this reduction. Grey Bruce pregnancy rates are lower than the provincial average, at 28 per 1000 teenage females in 2003.

Through contracts with pharmaceutical companies, the Health Unit has, for the last ten years, provided contraception at one-third the retail price. Young people and those without a drug plan have accessed this service to decrease their risk of unintended pregnancy.

Due to competition with lower priced generic products, pharmaceutical companies no longer support non-profit agencies like Public Health to the extent they have in the past. As the result of increased costs, the Health Unit will raise prices beginning in September. The costs for other program supplies are also increasing significantly. For example, the costs for vaginal speculums have increased by 25%.

The increase in supply costs coincide with growing demand for service resulting from worsening local unemployment rates and loss of drug plan benefits. Sexual Health program managers across Ontario are collaborating to explore strategies that ensure Public Health offers lower cost contraception to minimize rates of unintended pregnancy.

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### **UNIVERSAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING**

Early intervention for growth and development delays helps children reach their full potential, particularly in the preschool years. Public Health provides developmental screening for children at key points in their development and, if required, makes referrals to appropriate intervention services.

Approximately 95 - 98% of children in Grey Bruce are screened at birth using the Parkyn tool. Children are also screened during home visits, through use of a parent-administered tool provided in the *Let's Grow* mail-outs, and through locally accessible, community-based *Let's Learn* clinics.

On an annual basis typically, 65 - 68% of three-year-olds in Grey Bruce are screened at *Let's Learn*. In 2008, 912 children were screened for growth and development at these clinics with 67 children referred to community agencies for further assessment and intervention.

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### **SMALL DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS: TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has a technical support team to address drinking water issues that may arise during the inspection and assessment of small drinking water systems. Their expertise includes distribution, treatment, engineering, hydrogeology, public health and well construction. Their support will assist Public Health inspection staff to recognize operational issues and to guide the system owner/operator in maintaining safe practices.

The team will provide support in the following areas: source water type, well construction and well integrity, disinfection methods, construction, filtration, pump sizing, distribution, intake location and design, water quality indicators and results, water quality testing methods, instrumentation, water quality standards, available technologies, corrective action and sampling. Common issues and solutions will be provided to Public Health inspection staff to assist in ongoing staff training.

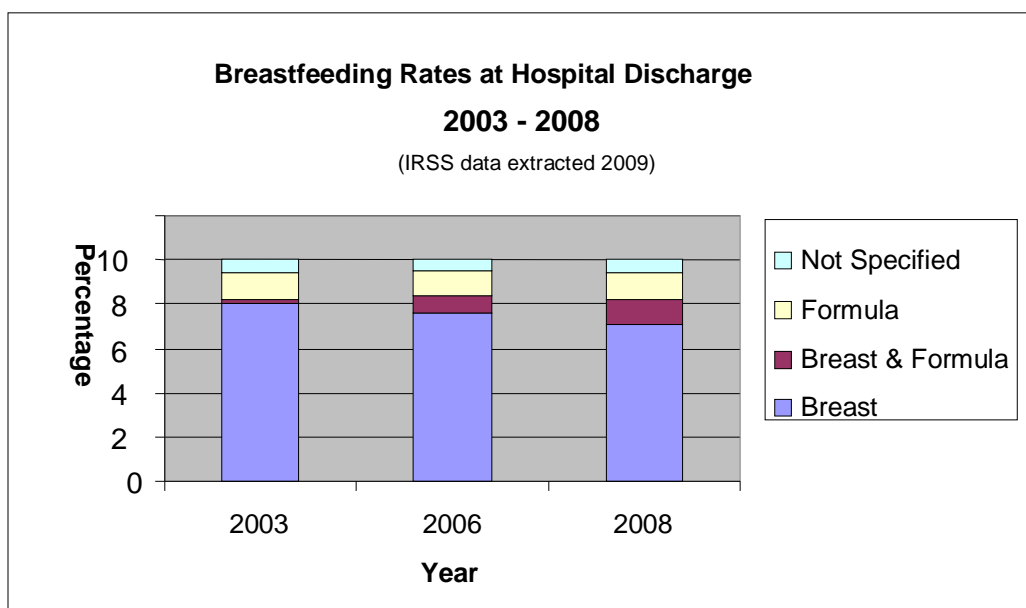
### BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Breastfeeding is the optimal food for infant nutrition. Over the past five years, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding by moms discharged from hospital has decreased slightly, with a correlating increase in moms feeding their infants both breast milk and formula. In 2008, 71% of women breastfed exclusively on discharge, 11% fed breast milk and formula, and 12% used formula (6% unspecified).

Public Health advocates exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding from six months to two years of age, with the appropriate introduction of other foods. Public Health works with community partners to support exclusive breastfeeding by:

- providing new moms with timely access to postpartum visits to assess breastfeeding and assist with breastfeeding difficulties
- working to ensure breastfeeding-friendly spaces where parents meet, including hospitals and Ontario Early Years Centres
- distributing a common resource containing consistent messaging about breastfeeding to all prenatal and postpartum families

In 2009, initiatives to support exclusive breastfeeding include partnering with the Brockton Family Health Team to offer lactation services to families in southern Grey Bruce.



### TRAVEL SERVICES

The Health Unit offers travel services to Grey Bruce residents including:

- provision of travel packages with destination-specific health and safety information
- immunization with travel vaccines, at a cost, at community clinic locations in Owen Sound, Walkerton, and Port Elgin
- consultation with clients who have questions about staying healthy and preventing illness while traveling

Travel service requests continue to increase steadily, with 734 travel packages provided to clients in 2008. In January and February this year, staff completed 145 travel packages. Travel-related information and vaccinations help ensure travelers stay healthy and reduce the risk of communicable diseases being brought into our area from abroad.

**YOUTH ACTION ALLIANCE OUTCOMES 2008**

The Youth Action Alliance (YAA) maintained a complement of 20 paid Peer Leaders and 35 volunteers in 2008. Program volunteers donated 1,231 hours of their time to YAA tobacco control activities and events.

Activities and outcomes in 2008 include:

- 3 community improvement events with 158 participants
- 8 advocacy activities, including post card campaigns in support of banning chewing tobacco and presentations to municipal councils urging support for the *Smoke-Free Cars* legislation
- 8 promotional events with 1,258 participants
- 8 entertainment/social events with 1,580 participants
- 17 educational presentations with 1,889 participants
- 41 media development activities resulting in 39 print, 26 radio and 11 television reports and 8 internet references
- 3,800 promotional and educational items distributed
- 596,169 hits logged to the *Target Youth* website, [www.targetyouth.ca](http://www.targetyouth.ca), with 16,448 website visits and 35,089 page views

In 2009, major YAA activities include advocating for smoke-free sports and recreation policies, increasing awareness of the relationship between tobacco products and mass media, and promoting the *Target Youth* website to local youth, with a focus on students in grades 7-9.

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**Stop TB Partnership**

[www.stoptb.org](http://www.stoptb.org)