

Quebec Lyme disease cases up 65% from last year

The number of cases has been steadily increasing since 2012

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Nearly 300 people in Quebec have been diagnosed with Lyme disease this year, up around 100 cases from last year.

The number of cases in the province has been steadily increasing since 2012, according to data from the Quebec Health Ministry.

In 2012, only 43 people were diagnosed with Lyme disease, compared with 125 in 2014 and 177 in 2016.

The year isn't even over yet and the numbers show 295 cases reported in Quebec from Jan. 1 to Oct. 3.

"In the areas where we are seeing more cases, we've started to warn people of the presence of infected ticks, especially in parks that are very busy," said François Milord, who works with the Montérégie department of public health.

"But faced with the big increase, we'll have to expand the the campaign next year."

Lyme disease is spread to humans through bites by ticks infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria, with symptoms occurring between three and 30 days after a bite.

- [Lyme disease on the rise in Quebec this summer](#)
- [As tick season hits, Lyme disease patients say they need better care](#)

A common sign of Lyme disease is a bull's eye-shaped rash on the skin. Symptoms range from a fever to joint aches.

Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics if it's detected early. If left untreated, it can lead to cardiac and neurological complications.

Most of the cases reported for this year originate from the Eastern Townships and Montérégie regions.

There were a total of 41 cases reported for Montreal.

"The increase of cases can be partially explained by a quicker diagnosis, but it's not only that," said Milord.

- [Quebec-based Detectick app helps identify which insects are ticks](#)
- [Lyme disease on the rise in Canada, but doctors still confused about diagnosis](#)

Milord said that each year, infected ticks are being found in wider areas and that mild autumn temperatures extend their active period, which usually lasts from April to November.

With files from Radio-Canada's Anne-Louise Despatie

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