

## Q&A – British Columbia Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) – Big Tick Project

- **What are the goals of the project?**
  - The primary goal of the project is to improve the evidence-base in BC on the distribution of *Ixodes* spp. ticks and the presence of tick-borne pathogens in these ticks through enhanced tick surveillance and testing in companion animals. A secondary goal is to raise awareness for the eTick.ca platform.
  - We will achieve this by assisting clinics in submitting tick images to eTick.ca, selectively acquiring *Ixodes* spp. specimens from BC companion animals (via submissions to eTick.ca) and performing the BCCDC PHL multiplex tick-borne pathogen panel (*Borrelia* spp., *Anaplasma* spp., *Ehrlichia* spp., *Babesia microti*, and *Rickettsia rickettsia*).
- **Will this study accept ticks from a pet owner?**
  - For the purposes of this study the tick photo submission to eTick.ca must be from a participating clinic. If a pet owner finds a tick, they can bring it to your clinic for submission to eTick.ca.
  - If the pet owner does not want to bring the tick to the clinic, they can still submit to eTick.ca, however they will not receive a request to have the tick tested for pathogens at this time.
- **What email should I use when I register for eTick.ca?**
  - When registering for eTick.ca, be sure to use the practice name (not individual) if possible (i.e. [jonesanimalhospital@domain.com](mailto:jonesanimalhospital@domain.com)), to ensure the photographic identification and potential request for the tick specimen goes directly back to the clinic.
  - Utilize animal hospital name as the USERNAME
  - For the first and last name on the profile, please add the clinic name as the first name (i.e. Jones Animal Hospital) and last name (i.e. Jones Animal Hospital)
- **Should I wait for results before initiating treatment for a patient I suspect of having tick-borne disease?**
  - No. It can take several weeks for the results to be provided to the clinic and treatment, if indicated, should not be withheld until results are available
- **I was requested to submit a tick, but I have not received test results**
  - It can take 4-6 weeks for the results to be returned.
  - Did the email address provided to eTick.ca clearly indicate a submission from a veterinary clinic (i.e. [jonesanimalhospital@domain.com](mailto:jonesanimalhospital@domain.com))?
- **The tick image I submitted to eTick.ca came back as *I. pacificus*. How will I be notified if I need to send the tick in for the BCCDC project?**
  - The BCCDC PHL will review the tick to ensure it meets submission requirements. You will be notified via the email address on your eTick.ca account by the BCCDC PHL with instructions on how to submit the tick (see answer below).

- **Will there be guidance on how to send the tick to the BCCDC PHL?**
  - Fill out and print off the BCCDC PHL submission form found: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Documents/MerckAH%20project%202.0%20tick%20submission%20form%20FINAL.pdf>
  - If the tick is still alive, please remove it from the host and place it in a small durable plastic container with a tight-fitting lid (e.g., empty pill bottle, NO GLASS CONTAINERS). Place it in the freezer for 24 hours prior to submitting to the BCCDC PHL. For instructions on how to remove a tick please visit the following link and click on “tick removal”: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease-borrelia-burgdorferi-infection>.
  - Label the container with the eTick.ca identification number provided to you in the eTick.ca email notification (ET-XXXXX).
  - To mail the tick, you can use a small plastic container such as a pill bottle placed in a padded envelope. Alternatively, if you want to minimize shipping costs, you can insert the tick into a piece of plastic drinking straw (pinch the ends and close them with tape) and mail it in a regular envelope. The tick will be protected from damage that could occur during postal transit, and the cost of shipping will be the same as for a letter. **PLEASE** include the completed **BC PHL submission** form in the envelope and address to:

Zoonotics and Emerging Pathogens  
BCCDC Public Health Laboratory  
655 West 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver, BC  
V5Z 4R4
  - PLEASE NOTE, unsolicited tick submissions or ticks not submitted through a veterinary clinic will not be identified or tested and will be disposed of.
- **Is there a cost?**
  - Ticks that meet the submission criteria will be:
    - Further identified and tested for pathogens of concern **FREE** of charge
    - Results will be returned to submitting veterinary clinics **FREE** of charge.
    - \*Please note that any additional processing/appointment charges your clinic may have will have to be covered by your client or your clinic.\*
- **Can I still submit a tick if I do not receive a submission request email?**
  - Yes, clinics can still submit ticks removed from companion animals to the BCCDC for identification and pathogen testing BUT standard rates will apply. Visit the following link for more details: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease-borrelia-burgdorferi-infection#:~:text=Visit%20a%20veterinarian%20if%20a,not%20a%20human%2Drelated%20tick>.

- **Who can I contact if I have questions?**
  - Dr. Erin Fraser at [publichealthvet@bccdc.ca](mailto:publichealthvet@bccdc.ca).