

# Camp Kwasind Tick Awareness & Prevention Information for Parents

## Helping Keep Campers Safe While Enjoying the Outdoors

Camp Kwasind

At Camp Kwasind, the safety, health, and well-being of every camper is one of our highest priorities. As an outdoor camp located in the beautiful Muskoka region of Ontario, we recognize that ticks are part of the natural environment throughout many parts of Ontario, including cottage country and wooded areas.

While ticks have not historically been a major issue in the Muskoka region compared to some higher-risk areas in Ontario, we believe in being proactive, informed, and prepared. Our goal is to provide families with confidence that Camp Kwasind is taking thoughtful and responsible steps to reduce risk, educate staff and campers, and respond appropriately if a tick is found.

## Understanding Ticks in Ontario

Ticks are small insects commonly found in wooded areas, tall grasses, leaf piles, and natural outdoor environments. Some ticks may carry bacteria that can cause Lyme disease.

The good news is:

- The overall risk remains relatively low in the Muskoka region compared to many southern Ontario hotspots.
- Most tick bites do **not** result in Lyme disease.
- Prompt tick removal significantly reduces risk.
- Awareness, prevention, and regular checks are highly effective.

Camp Kwasind takes a balanced and practical approach:  
We are not alarmist, but we are attentive, educated, and proactive.

# Camp Kwasind's Tick Prevention Strategy

## 1. Staff Training & Awareness

All summer staff receive training regarding:

- Tick awareness and identification
- Common tick habitats
- Preventative measures during outdoor activities
- How to perform age-appropriate camper reminders
- Proper tick removal procedure by Health Care only
- When to notify Health Centre staff
- How directors will notify parents if a tick is found on a child
- Documentation and monitoring procedures

Our Health Centre team also maintains current guidance regarding tick management and Lyme disease awareness.

## 2. Outdoor Activity Risk Reduction

Because Camp Kwasind is an outdoor-focused environment, we encourage practical preventative habits throughout the summer.

Staff encourage campers to:

- Stay on established trails when possible
- Avoid unnecessary walking through dense brush or tall grass
- Wear closed-toe shoes during many outdoor activities
- Wear longer socks or pants during certain wilderness, widgame or hiking activities when appropriate if they are going into the wooded area
- Use insect repellent when needed and permitted

Camp staff routinely monitor activity areas and seek to minimize overgrown gathering spaces where practical.

## 3. Camper Tick Check Education

One of the most effective ways to reduce risk is through regular self-checks.

At Camp Kwasind:

- Staff educate campers on the importance of checking for ticks.
- Cabin leaders remind campers to check themselves regularly, especially after hikes, wilderness activities, or games in wooded areas.
- Campers are responsible to check themselves:

- Legs and ankles
- Waistbands
- Underarms
- Behind knees
- Hairline and scalp
- Behind ears

For younger campers, cabin staff may provide verbal guidance and reminders while respecting camper privacy and appropriate supervision standards.

Camp staff do not conduct invasive physical tick inspections of campers. Instead, we focus on education, reminders, and age-appropriate supervision that encourages campers to take ownership of healthy outdoor habits.

#### **4. Health Centre Monitoring & Response**

If a tick is found on a camper:

##### **Our staff will:**

1. Calmly assess the situation and bring camper to Health Centre
2. Have a healthcare professional remove the tick carefully using approved methods
3. Have health care team clean and disinfect the area
4. Document the incident
5. Monitor for any concerning symptoms
6. Inform parents/guardians if there is a tick bite
7. Recommend medical follow-up if required

Whenever possible, staff will attempt to identify the type of tick, keep the tick and determine whether further monitoring or medical consultation is recommended.

#### **5. Parent Communication & Partnership**

We believe parents play an important role in prevention as well.

Before camp, families can help by:

- Talking with campers about outdoor awareness
- Packing appropriate clothing
- Sending approved insect repellent if desired
- Teaching campers how to check themselves for ticks

After camp, parents are encouraged to continue monitoring for symptoms such as:

- Rash
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle aches

If any symptoms appear after camp attendance, families should consult their healthcare provider and mention recent outdoor exposure.

## **Important Perspective for Families**

At Camp Kwasind, thousands of campers safely enjoy the outdoors each year through hiking, waterfront activities, games, campfires, canoeing, and adventure programming.

The benefits of outdoor experiences—including confidence, resilience, friendships, leadership development, physical activity, and spiritual growth—remain incredibly valuable and important.

Our commitment is to:

- Remain informed
- Take reasonable precautions
- Train our staff well
- Communicate clearly with families
- Respond carefully and responsibly when needed

We believe that through education, prevention, and attentive care, campers can continue to safely experience the incredible gift of outdoor camp life in Muskoka.

## **Questions?**

If you have questions regarding Camp Kwasind's health procedures or tick awareness practices, please contact our camp office at [register@kwasind.com](mailto:register@kwasind.com)

We are grateful for the trust families place in us and remain committed to providing a safe, caring, memorable, and well-supported camp experience for every camper.