

Article for the April 2014 quarterly Concord Municipal Light and Power Newsletter, which is mailed to all Concord Households.

FREE TICK TESTING FOR CONCORD RESIDENTS

Most residents know that Lyme disease is prevalent in our area; in fact, it is the most reported infectious disease in Concord. Other tick-borne illnesses, such as Babesiosis and Anaplasmosis, are on the rise.

The Concord Health Division is offering a new service to residents—if you are bitten by a tick, the tick may be submitted for free testing during 2014 to determine if it is carrying pathogens that cause Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, and Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis (HGA). Tick testing will be performed by the Laboratory of Medical Zoology (LMZ) at the University of Massachusetts.

If you should find a tick biting you, carefully remove it using tweezers and place in a sealable plastic bag. Submitting a sample is easy: go to www.TickReport.com, complete a testing submittal form and receive a sample number, place the tick with sample number in an envelope and mail it to the LMZ address indicated on the form. You will receive your results by email within 5 business days. Test results can be shared with your physician, if you choose. The findings of the testing are maintained anonymously and help local and state agencies build a surveillance database to better inform public health disease prevention programs and track tick-borne disease.

The cost for tick testing outside this program can be upwards of \$140, so we are pleased to offer this service to Concord residents for no cost for the coming year. Once the LMZ has analyzed 100 ticks from Concord, a discounted testing rate will be offered. Brochures describing the program in more detail will be available around town in mid-April, but samples may be submitted beginning April 1. We hope you will take advantage of this free testing program. Should you have any questions, please contact the Concord Health Division at 978 318 3275.