



**Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Public Health Director
Cayuga County Health Department
8 Dill St.
Auburn, NY 13021**



For Immediate Release: Monday, October 1, 2018

Confirmed Powassan Virus Case in Cayuga County

The Cayuga County Health Department has received notification from the New York State Department of Health of the first confirmed case of Powassan virus in an adult residing in Cayuga County. This is the furthest west in New York State that the virus has been identified.

Powassan virus is a rare, but often serious disease caused by a virus that is spread by the bite of an infected black-legged tick or deer tick. Unlike other tick-borne diseases, Powassan virus can be transmitted to a human from an infected tick while being attached to a person for as little as 15 minutes. Many individuals who become infected with the Powassan virus do not develop symptoms. Those who do develop symptoms usually have symptoms within one to four weeks after being bit by a tick carrying this virus. These symptoms can include, fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, and seizures. Some of the more severe infections can include symptoms such as head ache, high fever, confusion, tremors, seizures, paralysis, coma or death. The Powassan virus can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the membrane the surround the brain and spinal cord). Consult with your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms.

The Health Department would like to remind residents that personal protection is recommended during outdoor activities to avoid exposure to ticks. When in a potentially tick-infested area:

- Wear light-colored clothing (for easy tick discovery)
- Tuck pants into socks and shirt into pants
- Check frequently during outdoor activity for ticks on clothing or skin
- Brush off any ticks on clothing or skin before skin attachment occurs
- A thorough check of body surfaces for attached ticks should be done once indoors.

Wearing insect repellent can aid in reducing bites from ticks that can spread disease. Do not put the repellent on your face or directly onto children; put it on your hands and apply it to your child. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for application.

For more information, call the Cayuga County Health Department at 315-253-1560 or visit our website: www.cayugacounty.us/health
