

Browntail Moths

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March 5, 2019



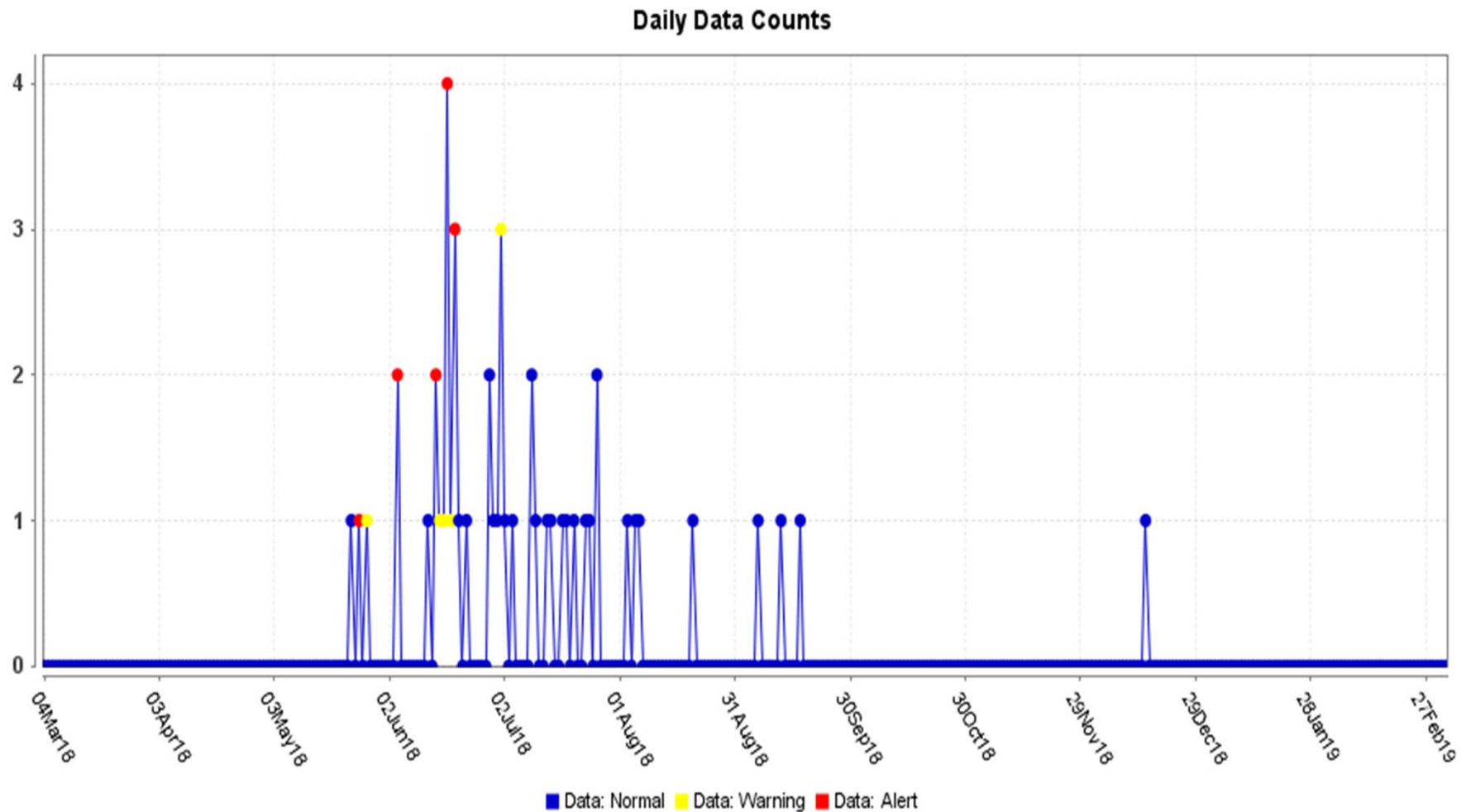
Browntail moths – why is it a problem?

- There is no specific treatment
- Localized problem so we can't learn from other places
- Difficult to monitor the health effects as not everyone will seek care
- Health effects can be difficult to distinguish from other conditions

Browntail moth human health surveillance

- Difficult to quantify the health effects as Browntail moth (BTM) rash is not reportable, and can be difficult to distinguish from other rashes (such as poison ivy)
- Using syndromic surveillance on emergency room visits it is possible to get an idea of when people are showing up and where. This is likely an underestimate of the true health burden
 - Looking at chief complaint and triage notes
 - Incomplete data on triage notes

ED visits that mention Browntail Moth: Maine - March 4, 2018 – March 4, 2019



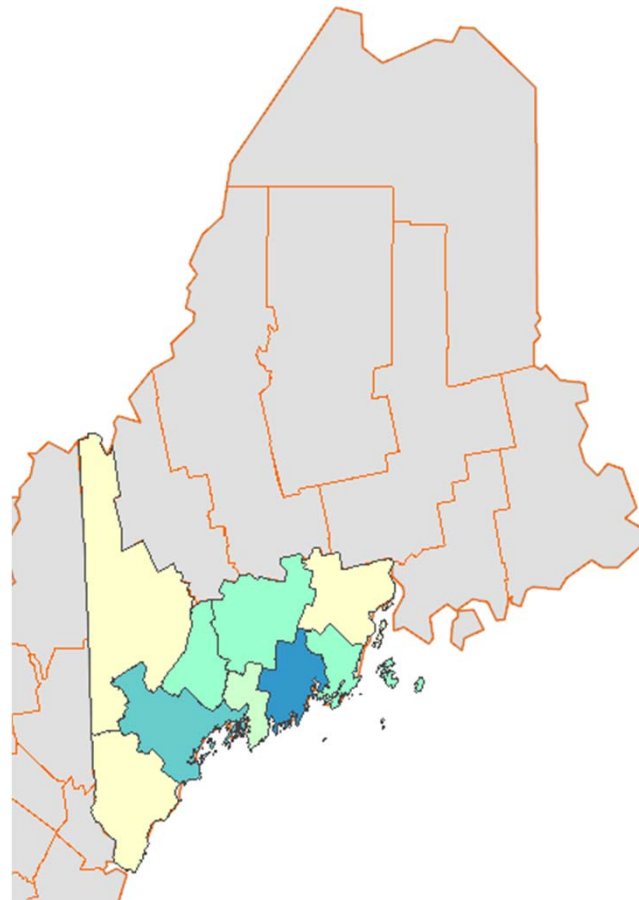
ED visits that mention Browntail Moth: Maine - March 4, 2018 – March 4, 2019

Counties

- 1 (n=3)
- 2 (n=1)
- 3 -- 4 (n=3)
- 5 -- 7 (n=1)
- 8 -- 27 (n=1)

region

- Counties



Diagnoses

- Rash and other nonspecific skin eruption
- Allergic contact dermatitis, unspecified
- Irritant contact dermatitis, unspecified cause
- Anaphylactic shock, unspecified, initial encounter
- Urticaria, unspecified
- Pruritus

Local solutions

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Midcoast Pediatrics website. The browser's address bar shows the URL www.midcoastpediatricspa.com/browntail-moth-rash/. The website header features a house icon and the text "Your Pediatric Home Midcoast Pediatrics". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Our Office Made Simple, Our Providers, New Patient Information, Forms, Health Information, and Contact. The main content area is titled "Browntail Moth Rash" and includes a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: Home / Health Information / Browntail Moth Rash". The text describes the rash as a nuisance and provides advice on treatment, such as using baking soda or Aveeno Oatmeal Bath. A sidebar on the right contains contact information: Phone: (207) 721-8333, Fax: (207) 798-4618, and the address 121 Medical Dr., Brunswick ME 04011. It also lists office hours (Monday-Friday 7:30am to 5pm), walk-in time (Monday-Friday 7am to 7:45am), and nurse triage by phone (Monday-Friday 9am to 4:30pm). A button at the bottom of the sidebar reads "From the Office Health Information Top Ten Ticks and Lyme Disease in Maine". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 7:44 PM on 3/4/2019.

Browser tabs: Browntail Moth Rash - Midcoast, Browntail Moth Rash Relief Spre...

Address bar: Not secure | www.midcoastpediatricspa.com/browntail-moth-rash/

Navigation menu: Home, Our Office Made Simple, Our Providers, New Patient Information, Forms, Health Information, Contact

Breadcrumb: You are here: Home / Health Information / Browntail Moth Rash

Browntail Moth Rash

Browntail moths are a nuisance every year at this time. For details from the Maine CDC about browntail moth and ways to decrease exposure, please [click here](#).

Browntail moth rash tends to be red, bumpy and itchy. Unfortunately, many rashes can be described this way. If you suspect your child has browntail moth rash, start by giving him/her a comfortably cool bath with either baking soda or Aveeno Oatmeal Bath. You may apply over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream, such as Cortaid, sparingly to the itchiest areas. To all areas you may apply Calamine or Caladryl lotion. For very young children, be careful not to apply any creams or lotions to places where he/she may rub them into eyes or mouth. In these areas you may apply a mixture of baking soda and water as a lotion. Keep fingernails short and hands clean. Be sure to wash all clothing your child was wearing when outdoors. If symptoms are not at least somewhat relieved by these measures, contact our office for additional advice.

Phone: (207) 721-8333 Fax: (207) 798-4618
121 Medical Dr., Brunswick ME 04011 - [Directions](#)

Office Hours - [More About Appointments](#)
Monday - Friday 7:30am to 5pm
Please bring your insurance card to EVERY visit!

Walk-In Time for Established Patients
Monday - Friday 7am to 7:45am

Nurse Triage by Phone
Monday - Friday 9am to 4:30pm

From the Office Health Information Top Ten
Ticks and Lyme Disease in Maine

System tray: 7:44 PM 3/4/2019

Local solutions

Browntail Moth Season is Here - x | Browntail Moth Rash Relief Spra - x | +

https://www.coastalpharmacyandwellness.com/browntail-moth-get-facts-now/

Apps | NBS | CDC Case Definitions | ARBONET | ILINet-Log In | CDC FluView | ID Epi | CDC MMWR | Flu Forecasting | CDC SAMS (Epi-X) | Per Diem Rates | CDC SAMS Portal | Maine CDC Press R... | Other bookmarks

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Treatment

There is no antidote for the toxins, so treatment is focused on relieving symptoms and eliminating further exposure. Coastal provides a compounded topical browntail moth medication which has been shown to significantly reduce discomfort from the rash. The compound is available, by prescription only, in both cream or spray. The spray is especially beneficial in treating these types of rashes that are painful to touch. For those who have an acute case, a short course of oral corticosteroids may be prescribed.

Since many reactions occur over weekends, seeing a doctor may not be immediately possible. In these cases, you may find relief by soaking in a warm bath and applying calamine lotion or antihistamine cream.

Prevention

There are several actions you can take to reduce your risks.

- **Avoid places that appear to be infested.** Indicators include vacated nests and trees and shrubs with a lot of missing leaves.
- **Wear a respirator, protective eyewear, and cover exposed areas of skin.** This is important on windy days or when performing activities that would stir up hairs such as lawnmowing or raking.
- **Wipe or rinse off lawn furniture before sitting in them.**

Take precautions when driving through infested areas in an open air vehicle

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Windows taskbar: File Explorer, Chrome, Edge, Outlook, RSA, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, 7:46 PM 3/4/2019

Local Solutions

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Browntail Moth
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Kennebec
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today!

*Available by prescription
only at Kennebec Pharmacy locations in
Augusta, Brunswick, and Rockport.

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What is Maine CDC doing?

- Browntail moth public health nuisance declaration process
- Monitoring syndromic surveillance for BTM health issues
- Public information
 - Centralized phone number (reviewing options)
 - Frequently asked questions on website
 - Fact sheet
 - Issue health alert in collaboration with Maine Forest Service

Public Health Nuisance Declaration

- Browntail moth public health nuisance declaration
 - Doesn't provide funding, but allows towns to access emergency funding, and may allow for more treatment options depending on the town
 - <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/browntail-moth/index.shtml>
 - Two towns completed the application process in 2018

Browntail Moth Caterpillar Fact Sheet



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention
An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

What are browntail moths and why should I worry?

The Maine Forest Service has seen a recent increase in browntail moths. The moth caterpillar has tiny poisonous hairs that can cause a skin rash similar to poison ivy and other more severe reactions in sensitive individuals. People within affected areas may be at risk.

What do the caterpillars look like?

They may reach 1.5 inches in length and are brown with a broken white stripe on each side and two red spots on the hind end.



What time of year am I at risk?

The caterpillars are active from April to late June though the hairs remain toxic throughout the summer.

Do I have to touch a caterpillar to get a rash?

No. The hairs break off from cast skins when the caterpillars molt. The hairs become airborne and are on surrounding plants and grass.

What symptoms can be caused by contact with the hairs?

Direct contact with airborne hairs can cause a localized skin rash that may last for a few hours up to several days. The rash may be red, bumpy and itchy. Certain people may experience a more severe form of the rash that may last for several weeks. In some cases, the poisonous hairs may be inhaled and can cause respiratory distress.

What are the possible treatments?

Treatment is based on eliminating exposure to the caterpillar hairs by removal of the hairs and treating the symptoms.

Start by taking a shower or cool bath and wash all clothing you were wearing outdoors. A mild rash may be treated with over-the-counter remedies. Consult your physician if you develop a severe reaction to the browntail moth hairs or have trouble breathing.

What can I do to prevent it?

- Avoid places heavily infested by caterpillars.
- Take a cool shower and change clothes after activities where you may come into contact with caterpillar hairs.
- Rake, mow, weed whack etc. when foliage is wet to prevent the hairs from becoming airborne. Also wear a respirator, goggles and coveralls.
- Dry laundry inside during June and July to avoid the hairs imbedding on clothing.

Where can I get more information?

If you are having symptoms related to brown-tail moths, contact the poison center at 1-800-222-1222, [chat online](#) or text POISON to 85511.

For more information, contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821 or visiting the [Maine.gov](#) websites below:

Browntail moth Precautions -Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:
http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/browntail_moth_precautions.htm

Rash info - Department of Education:
<http://maine.gov/education/sh/environmental/browntail.pdf>

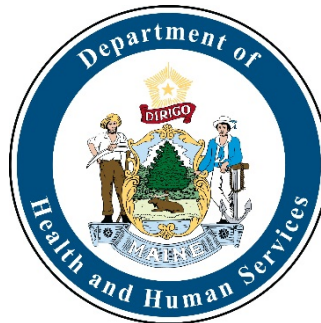
Browntail moth webpage - Maine Forest Service: http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm

Resources

- Maine CDC BTM page
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/browntail-moth/index.shtml>
- Maine DACF BTM page
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm
- Maine Forest Service BTM page
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/browntail_moth.htm

Questions?

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Disease.reporting@maine.gov
800-821-5821



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Center for Disease Control and Prevention