What are brown tail moths and why should I worry?
The Maine Forest Service has seen a recent increase in brown tail 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 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 brown tail 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