

Peel health officials looking out for West Nile Virus

Peel Public Health has started its annual surveillance program to find mosquitoes that might be spreading West Nile Virus (WNV). The adult mosquito surveillance program started June 18. Adult mosquitoes are collected weekly from mosquito traps at 33 fixed locations throughout the region until late September. To date, 62 mosquito batches have been tested for WNV and one has tested positive. That was last week and involved a batch found in Mississauga. That is the only one that has been found in Canada so far this year.

No human cases of WNV have been reported in Peel.

The larviciding program started June 1 and will continue until Sept. 30.

Larviciding involves applying environmentally-friendly products to reduce mosquito larvae in stagnant water.

The first round of roadside catch basin larviciding is ongoing and is expected to be completed in early July. The first round is indicated by a blue dot on the catch basin grate. It takes at least three weeks to complete a round of larviciding.

There will be three rounds of roadside catch basin larviciding this year.

Larviciding of catch basins in the green spaces of parks in Peel has been completed. The treatment of surface water sites on public lands is ongoing.

Residents are advised to reduce the risk of WNV by removing stagnant water on their property, by emptying or disposing of containers that can hold water, such as old tires, wheelbarrows, barrels, pails, toys and recycling bins; and turning over wading pools, removing water that collects on pool covers and making sure the pool's pump is circulating

There are also steps to be taken to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

? Avoiding areas with large numbers of mosquitoes.

? Wearing light-coloured clothing, including long sleeves, long pants, socks and a hat whenever you are outdoors (even when you are in your backyard), especially at dusk and at dawn.

? Use an insect repellent and apply it according to the manufacturer's directions.

For more tips, visit www.peel-bugbite.ca

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not reported any WNV activity.