

Peel reports first human case of West Nile Virus this year

Peel Public Health has confirmed the first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) for 2024 in a Mississauga resident.

WNV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While most people who contract the disease will show no symptoms, some will experience mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body ache, mild rash, and swollen lymph glands. In rare cases, persons infected with WNV will develop a more severe form of the disease. People over 50 and those with a compromised immune system are at the highest risk of becoming severely ill when infected with WNV.

Disease activity fluctuates yearly and depends on rainfall and temperature. Peel Public Health monitors WNV activity in the local adult mosquito population across the Region during the summer season. Mosquitoes collected in Peel began to test positive for the WNV beginning in early July and residents are most likely to encounter infected mosquitoes between July and September.

Residents are encouraged to protect themselves from mosquito bites by:

Applying an approved insect repellent containing an ingredient effective against mosquitoes, such as DEET or icaridin, to exposed skin and clothing. Read and follow the manufacturer's directions for safe use;

Note: Infants younger than 6 months old, should not use an insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin. Instead, use a mosquito net when babies are outdoors in a crib or stroller;

Avoiding areas with large mosquito populations and taking extra precautions between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, and at any time in or near shady, wooded areas;

Wearing light-coloured, tightly woven, loose-fitting clothing such as long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, shoes and socks to protect exposed skin;

Making sure all window and door screens fit securely and are free of tears and holes;

Ensuring that openings to rain barrels are always covered with a screen mesh;

Removing or draining items on your property that hold stagnant water. Water that is stagnant for more than seven days is an ideal breeding site for mosquitoes. You can report stagnant water sites to Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700