

West Nile Virus found in Mississauga mosquitoes

A mosquito batch collected last week in Mississauga has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV).

The positive batch was collected near Derry Road and Goreway Drive. This is the first batch to test positive for WNV in Peel in 2016.

These mosquitoes were collected from one of the 31 traps Peel Public Health maintains and monitors from June to September as part of our annual surveillance program, said Associate Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh.

This year's summer has been hotter than usual, which has resulted in increased mosquito activity. More mosquitoes also increase the possibility of WNV transmission. While WNV typically is a mild disease in humans, rare complications can occur. Prevention is the best defence against contracting illness, so while Region residents enjoy the summer outdoors, Peel Public Health encourages everyone to make sure they protect themselves and their family by using an insect repellent containing DEET before heading outside.

Residents are asked to help reduce the mosquito population in Peel by removing prime breeding sites on their property.

The most effective way of eliminating mosquitoes near your home is to remove items that collect water. Turn over old tires or wheelbarrows; empty out pails and plastic wading pools; change the water in your birdbaths often; and put away toys, Loh said. If you happen to notice standing water on public property, report it online at peel-bugbite.ca or by calling Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700.

Residents can further reduce their potential exposure to West Nile virus by:

- Avoiding areas with high mosquito populations.
- Wearing light-coloured clothing, including long sleeves, pants and a hat, to cover exposed skin, even in their own backyard.
- Using an insect repellent containing DEET and applying it according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Taking extra precaution from dusk to dawn when mosquito activity is higher. If possible, stay indoors.

There have been no confirmed human cases of WNV in Ontario this season.

For more information about WNV, visit peel-bugbite.ca or call Region of Peel - Public Health at 905-799-7700 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Caledon residents can call toll free at 905-584-2216.