

West Nile virus-positive mosquitoes found in Peel

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Peel residents have been issued a reminder to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

On July 24, the Region of Peel announced it had found West Nile virus-positive mosquitoes at a trap in Brampton, by North Park Drive and Torbram Road.

Each year, Peel Public Health monitors 33 mosquito traps across Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga to detect the virus. It said it collects and tests mosquitoes from the traps weekly from mid-June to September.

"Public Health staff also survey public areas for stagnant water that may serve as mosquito breeding sites and treat identified sites with larvicide," reads the Region's announcement.

West Nile virus is passed to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito and there have been no confirmed human cases of the virus in Peel in 2023.

The Region said that while the risk of catching West Nile virus is low, residents should still follow advice to protect themselves from bites.

Peel Public Health recommends that people apply a Health Canada-approved insect repellent containing an ingredient that's effective against mosquitoes such as DEET or Icaridin. However, infants under the age of six months should not have repellent used on them.

"Instead, use a mosquito net when babies are outdoors in a crib or stroller," said Public Health.

Wearing light-coloured, tightly woven and loose-fitting clothing to protect exposed skin is also effective in protecting oneself from bites. Mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn, and can be found in large quantities in shaded and wooded areas.

Stagnant water is also a concern as water that's been stagnant for over seven days is a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes. Residents are encouraged to remove or drain any items on their property that hold stagnant water.

The last tip the Region gave was to make sure any windows and door screens on one's house fit securely and are free of any tears and holes.

Caledon residents can report stagnant water sites to the Region of Peel by calling 905-584-2216 and those looking for more information about West Nile virus in Peel can visit the Region's website, peelregion.ca.