

## King resident tests positive for West Nile virus

**By Mark Pavilons**

A King resident has tested positive for the West Nile virus. This is the first human case of the virus reported in 2019 in York Region.

The risk of exposure to West Nile virus can be reduced by taking simple steps, said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's medical officer of health. Remember to use insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin, wear protective clothing when outdoors and remove standing water around your home in places such as flower pots, bird baths and containers.

York Region encourages residents to follow simple Fight the Bite tips to reduce their chance of being bitten by mosquitos:

- Limit outdoor activities in the early morning and early evening when mosquitos are most active.

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long sleeves, pants and socks.

- Use insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin when outdoors.

- Clean or remove standing water sources, including bird baths, empty containers, outdoor toys and flower pots.

Since 2003, York Public Health has implemented an annual West Nile virus control plan that includes monitoring and controlling the mosquito population via traps and larviciding.

Mosquito activity varies from year to year. It is important to note not all mosquitos are West Nile virus carriers. One mosquito trap has tested positive for the virus this year in the City of Vaughan, however, there may still be mosquitos carrying the virus in other municipalities. In addition, positive West Nile virus cases have been reported in other regions throughout Ontario.

Many people exposed to West Nile virus do not develop symptoms. Those who develop West Nile virus illness may experience symptoms including fever, fatigue, headache, body aches, mild rash and swollen lymph glands. In rare cases, the virus can cause serious neurological illness which can present with severe headache, stiff neck and confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms within two to 15 days after a mosquito bite, residents are advised to seek medical attention. West Nile virus is not transmitted person-to-person and is primarily transferred through mosquitoes infected with the virus.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit [york.ca/westnile](http://york.ca/westnile) or contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-512-6228.