

Mosquitoes in York Region test positive for West Nile virus

The Regional Municipality of York monitors West Nile virus activity by setting mosquito traps and testing for West Nile virus. To date, one mosquito trap in the City of Markham near Steeles Avenue East and Bayview Avenue has tested positive for West Nile virus. West Nile virus can cause serious illness and is passed to humans if they are bitten by an infected mosquito, said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health. Although the chance of being bitten by an infected mosquito is rare, residents are advised to take precautions when outside in the early morning and evening to prevent mosquito bites and reduce the chance of getting West Nile virus. To protect yourself and family from West Nile virus, follow these simple steps:

- Get rid of mosquito-friendly areas at home. Clean or remove standing water sources, including bird baths, flower pots, empty containers, clogged eavestroughs, swimming pool covers and outdoor toys like sand and water playsets or kiddie pools.
- Ensure the window screens on your home are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Cover up while outside. Use insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin. Check label directions for use.
- Wear protective clothing, including socks, long-sleeved shirts and jackets.
- Dress with lighter colours if possible as mosquitoes are attracted to darker colours.
- Minimize outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

As part of York Region's West Nile virus control plan, York Region Public Health educates residents on self-protection, investigates human cases and conducts surveillance. York Region Public Health uses larvicide in catch basins to control mosquito breeding along Regional and municipal roads and in other stagnant public water sources, including roadside ditches. Private backyard catch basins are treated upon request. To review the current status of West Nile virus in Ontario, visit publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Pages/WNV.aspx For more information on West Nile virus or to report standing water in your neighbourhood, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-512-6228 or visit york.ca/westnile