

Mosquito traps set up across York Region for surveillance

A mosquito pool has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) in The Regional Municipality of York. The mosquitoes were trapped in Markham close to the intersection of Bayview Avenue and John Street.

York Region Public Health sets up mosquito traps across the Region to monitor West Nile virus activity, said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's medical officer of health. Positive mosquitoes are the first indication of West Nile virus in the community each season and remind us that we need to protect ourselves.

To protect yourself and family from WNV, follow these simple steps:

Get rid of mosquito-friendly areas at home.

Clean up standing water where mosquitoes are likely to breed, including bird baths, flower pots, swimming pool covers, clogged gutters and eavestroughs.

Make sure screens on your home are tight-fitting and in good repair.

Wear protective clothing, including socks, long-sleeved shirts and jackets.

Wear lighter colours if possible as mosquitoes are attracted to darker colours.

Use insect repellent check label directions for use.

Minimize outdoor activities when mosquitoes are most active, such as dusk and dawn.

As part of the York Region 2013 West Nile virus (WNV) Control Plan, York Region Public Health larvicides catch basins to interrupt mosquito breeding, educates residents on self-protection, investigates human cases and conducts surveillance.

York Region treats catch basins along Regional and municipal roads and other stagnant public water sources, including roadside ditches. Private backyard catch basins are treated upon request.

Symptoms of WNV illness may include fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, confusion, severe headache and a sudden sensitivity to light. In rare cases, the virus can cause serious neurological illness, including encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Those experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention.

For more information on this or any other public-health related topic, please contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca/westnile.