



Renfrew County and District Health Unit Media Release

For Immediate Release: August 1, 2017

West Nile Virus Found in Mosquitoes in Renfrew County

Mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus (WNV) have been found in Laurentian Valley Township around the intersection of Highway 41 and Whitewater Road. This is the first time that mosquitoes have tested positive for WNV in Renfrew County and District since the health unit began monitoring mosquitoes for WNV in 2005. Mosquito traps are set up on a weekly basis across the region during the summer months. There have not been any reported human cases of WNV so far in 2017.

“The Renfrew County and District Health Unit has been actively monitoring mosquitoes for West Nile virus” says Dr. Kieran Moore, Acting Medical Officer of Health. “This recent finding of local mosquitoes carrying WNV serves as a reminder that even though the risk is low, individuals should take precautions to prevent bites and reduce breeding sites”.

About West Nile Virus

WNV is an infection found in birds, and carried by mosquitoes which feed on infected birds. WNV is spread to humans and animals through bites by infected mosquitoes. 4 out of 5 people infected will not show any symptoms. Others may see early symptoms of fever, headache, body aches, skin rash, and occasionally, vomiting and nausea. Of those showing symptoms, approximately 1 in 150 may develop more serious symptoms such as stiff neck, confusion, tremors, numbness or sudden sensitivity to light. If you believe you are experiencing symptoms of WNV, please contact your healthcare provider.

The risk of being infected by the West Nile virus is low, but now is a good time to reduce your risk by the following actions:

Cover up when outside by:

- Wearing light-coloured clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, jackets, long pants, hats and socks, especially between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Applying federally-registered insect repellent (containing DEET) on exposed skin to limit exposure to mosquitoes. Follow label instructions for proper application.

Clean up by:

- Removing any standing water around your home, cottage or campsite. Mosquitoes need stagnant water to lay their eggs, and even small amounts will do such as that found in bird baths, old tires and unused containers.
- Keeping bushes and shrubs clear of overgrowth and debris. Adult mosquitoes also like to rest in dense shrubbery.

- Turning over compost piles on a regular basis.
- Making sure homes and businesses are “bug tight” by ensuring windows and door screens fit tightly.

For more information about West Nile virus including tips on how you can “Fight the Bite”, please visit the health unit website at www.rcdhu.com

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