

Spring 2008

Bti: Larviciding in Surface Waters

The City of Toronto has a comprehensive program to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus (WNV). Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) is being applied to open bodies of stagnant water to reduce the mosquito population. Toronto Public Health is following provincial and federal guidelines for the application of Bti.

What is Bti?

Bti is a larvicide that kills mosquitoes during the larval stage of development. It is made from a naturally occurring bacterium in soil. Bti has been used effectively since 1982 for insect control, particularly for mosquitoes and black flies.

How does Bti work?

Bti is placed in areas of standing water where mosquitoes breed, such as ditches and shallow ponds. This product kills larvae by damaging their digestive system.

Is Bti harmful to humans?

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency of Health Canada has determined that Bti poses little threat to human health when used for mosquito control.

What is the effect of Bti on the environment?

The bacteria Bti occurs naturally in the soil and is harmless to mammals, fish, birds, and insects other than mosquitoes and black flies. Bti biodegrades quickly in the environment through exposure to sunlight and microorganisms.

Is it safe for children and pets to play in areas that have been treated with Bti?

Signs will be posted in areas where Bti has been applied and it is recommended to keep children and pets away from treated areas. Direct contact with Bti can cause mild skin and eye irritation. Seek medical advice if you think you may have come in contact with Bti.

For more information call 416-338-7600.