

Summer 2005

## City of Toronto West Nile Virus program

The first human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Toronto occurred in 2002 when 163 WNV cases and 11 deaths were reported to Toronto Public Health (TPH). In 2003, 44 cases of WNV were reported and there were no deaths. Toronto reported its first probable human case of West Nile Virus for 2005 on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The City has a WNV control program that includes bird and mosquito surveillance, a public education campaign and a mosquito-reduction larvicide program.

### **Toronto Public Health initiatives to control West Nile Virus in 2005:**

#### **WNV Information – 416-338-7600**

The WNV information line is available seven days a week to report dead birds and concerns about standing water.

#### **Bird surveillance and pick-up**

Crows and blue jays are tested at the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Centre in Guelph for WNV to determine the presence of the virus in the city.

#### **Mosquito trapping – adult**

Toronto Public Health sets up traps throughout the city and will test mosquitoes for WNV.

#### **Mosquito surveillance – larvae**

Through surveillance, TPH identifies breeding sites for *culex pipiens* and *culex restuans* mosquitoes – the primary carriers of the virus. These species are the target of larviciding measures.

#### **Mosquito control – larviciding**

Toronto's larviciding program is designed to reduce the mosquito population at the larval stage. The City applies larvicide in catch basins and open bodies of stagnant water.

#### **Human surveillance**

West Nile Virus must be reported to TPH by physicians and laboratories. Public Health tracks the number of human cases of West Nile Virus and provides information on the symptoms of the virus to physicians and hospitals. Additional surveillance is done around areas where cases may have occurred to prevent further infections.

#### **Education and outreach**

The City of Toronto has a public education campaign including: information sessions; paid advertising; circulation of materials to libraries and civic and recreation centres; and regular updates in existing City publications and on the web site. This information emphasizes both what the City is doing and what residents, businesses and institutions can do. Strategies to reduce mosquito breeding sites are promoted to the private sector and institutional partners such as school boards, hospitals, TTC, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Toronto Hydro.

**For more information call 416-338-7600.**