

August 23, 2004

Toronto reports first probable West Nile Virus case

Toronto Public Health is reporting the City's first probable human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2004.

A 50 year-old female resident visited her doctor with complaints of symptoms of WNV early last week. She has not been hospitalized, and is now recovering at home. Public Health staff are investigating the possibility she may have acquired the virus during an out-of-province holiday trip.

Dr. Michael Finkelstein, Associate Medical Officer of Health, said this is the time of year when human cases begin to appear. "We are expecting to see cases at this time of year, but we are hopeful there will be few of them. The majority of people who are infected show no symptoms, or experience a mild flu-like illness that lasts a few days. We continue to urge the public to take precautions to reduce the risk."

Although the weather has been cooler and the days are getting shorter, mosquitoes are still present and the following precautions are recommended:

- Use insect repellent containing 10% DEET or less
- Wear light colour clothing and cover up whenever possible
- Take precautions outdoors, especially in early morning and early evening, when mosquitoes are most active
- Remove standing water around the home

To date, Toronto has reported nine birds and six mosquito pools testing positive for WNV. The City is continuing its larvicide program to reduce mosquito breeding, and its bird and mosquito WNV surveillance program.

For more information, visit the City's web site, or call 416-338-7600.

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