

September 2, 2005

## **Toronto records third West Nile Virus death**

Dr. David McKeown, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, today reported the city's third West Nile Virus-related death.

A 57-year-old woman from Etobicoke died Aug. 29 in hospital after becoming ill in mid-August. There are 21 human cases reported to date in Toronto, including three deaths.

Dr. McKeown reported that, of the 21 cases, most of the serious illness has occurred among older persons and there have not been any cases in children.

"These deaths are tragic, but the overall risk to the general population from West Nile Virus remains low," Dr. McKeown said. "The end of the summer is the period of highest risk and we continue to recommend that residents take care to avoid mosquito bites."

Only about 20 per cent of people who become infected with West Nile Virus will experience any symptoms. Most individuals who experience illness due to West Nile Virus will have mild symptoms such as fever, headaches and body aches that may be accompanied by skin rash and swollen glands.

Less than one per cent of those infected become seriously ill with symptoms that include stiff neck, confusion, severe headache and sudden sensitivity to light. Those over the age of 55 and people with compromised immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness.

Residents are reminded to:

- take precautions in the early morning and evening, when mosquitoes are most active
- wear light-coloured clothing, long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks
- use repellent containing DEET when outdoors in areas with mosquitoes
- repair any holes in door and window screens
- eliminate mosquito breeding sites around the home.

For more information about West Nile Virus, residents can call 416-338-7600 or visit our web site at [www.toronto.ca/health](http://www.toronto.ca/health)

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