

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mosquitoes Can Carry a Nasty Bite: Be Aware of West Nile Virus



Peterborough Public Health is advising residents to avoid mosquito bites this season and reduce breeding grounds in order to prevent the spread of West Nile virus.

“With the damp spring so far, we could see more mosquitoes this year so it’s even more important to protect yourself by cleaning up and covering up,” says Wanda Tonus, Public Health Inspector. “Meanwhile we continue to look for evidence of West Nile virus throughout our area to monitor its spread in Ontario.”

Peterborough Public Health staff trap mosquitoes and test larvae from standing water pools throughout the City and County of Peterborough. In 2016 staff collected more than 5,000 local mosquitoes and none tested positive for West Nile virus. In 2016, [Public Health](#)

[Ontario reports](#) that across the province there were 211 positive mosquito pools and 49 confirmed human cases of West Nile virus.

How do you protect yourself?

Clean Up:

- Continually empty standing water that mosquitoes need to lay their eggs. This includes flower pots, wheel barrows, pool covers, old tires and garbage/recycling cans.
- Fill in low depressions in your lawn.
- Change water in bird baths at least once a week.
- Clean out dense bushes and shrubs where mosquitoes can rest.
- Turn over compost pile on a regular basis.
- Ensure window and door screens fit tightly and do not have holes.

Cover Up:

- Use federally-registered personal insect repellent on exposed skin, such as products containing DEET.
- When appropriate weather, wear protective clothing outside. This includes long sleeved shirts, jackets, long pants, hats, socks – choose to wear light coloured clothing as mosquitoes tend to be attracted to darker colours.

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What are the symptoms of West Nile virus?

Approximately 80% of those infected with West Nile virus do not show any symptoms. Of the 20% that do show symptoms, most experience mild illness with symptoms such as:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Fatigue
- Skin rash
- Occasionally, vomiting and nausea

Less than 1% of those infected with West Nile virus experience severe illness involving the central nervous system. In its most serious state, West Nile virus infection can cause an inflammation in the brain, otherwise known as encephalitis.

For more information on mosquitoes and West Nile virus please contact the Vector Borne Disease Program at Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000, ext. 240.

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For further information, please contact:

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