

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fight the Bite: Health Unit Begins West Nile Virus Surveillance

Higher Temperatures Could Increase Spread of Virus

Tuesday, June 22, 2010, Peterborough



The Peterborough County-City Health Unit has begun monitoring local mosquitoes for West Nile Virus in what could be a season that sees the disease spreading in Canada due to higher temperatures.

“Hotter weather can increase the risk of West Nile Virus, so it’s a concern that Environment Canada is predicting a warmer summer than usual,” said Donna Churipuy, Health Unit Program Manager. “That is why we are encouraging local residents to fight the bite by

protecting themselves with insect repellants and dumping any standing water on their property to prevent mosquito breeding grounds.”

There are several ways higher temperatures can increase the spread of West Nile Virus. Mosquito populations increase when the weather warms up because it speeds up their breeding cycle. It can also cause amplification of the virus to occur more quickly in infected birds thereby making it possible for humans to become infected earlier in the season.

The Health Unit’s mosquito surveillance program includes sampling storm water management ponds for larvae and trapping mosquitoes to test them for West Nile Virus. The Health Unit also responds to complaints from local residents about standing water and enforces the City of Peterborough by-law which states that to prevent this health hazard, standing water may not be present for more than 4 days on any property.

Photo Opportunity

Media are invited to photograph/video Health Unit staff dipping for mosquitoes as part of the surveillance program.

When:

Wednesday, June 23 from
11:00 to 11:45 a.m.

Where:

Storm Water Management
Pond at the northeast corner
of Sherbrooke St. &
Glenforest Blvd.

continued...

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For the best protection against West Nile Virus, the Health Unit recommends the following:

- Avoid being outdoors at peak mosquito activity times (between dusk and dawn), but remember that mosquitoes can bite at any time of day
- Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved clothing to cover up as much as possible
- Insect repellent containing DEET is the best proven way of keeping the bugs away. Know your DEET concentration for various age ranges:

Age	Maximum amount of DEET in insect repellent	Maximum daily application	Hours of protection
Less than 6 months	Do not use insect repellent. Instead use mosquito netting around strollers and playpens	--	--
6 months to 2 years	10%	Only once per day	3 hours per application
2 to 12 years	10%	3 times per day	3 hours per application
12 years and older	30%	As needed	6 hours per application

Eliminating any standing water is also important tactic in West Nile Virus prevention to reduce massive mosquito breeding, especially in urban settings. In fact, the species of mosquito most responsible for the spread of the disease is most commonly found in the urban environment.

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For further information, please contact:

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