

Media Release



West Nile Virus (WNV)

September 12, 2024 – For immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit has received reports that West Nile virus has been identified in deceased birds in our District. Prevention is the key to protecting yourself and others from West Nile virus.

West Nile virus is spread to humans and animals by the bite of an infected mosquito, although being bitten by an infected mosquito will not necessarily cause symptoms. While the majority of people (80%) who become infected with West Nile virus do not become ill, those who do usually experience mild flu-like symptoms. Less than 1% of people infected with the virus become seriously ill. It is recommended that you seek medical attention if feeling unwell.

If you come across a deceased bird you should avoid direct contact with it. You should safely discard the carcass into the garbage for pick up.

Discarding it Safely:

- Do not touch the bird directly
- Use a shovel and/or wear gloves
- Place the bird in a plastic bag and tie it closed
- Place that bag in a second plastic bag, tie it closed and put it in the garbage
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water

The best way to avoid becoming infected with West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Here are things you can do:

- When you are outside, wear light-coloured clothing, closed-toe footwear, socks, and long-sleeved tops and pants.
- When you are outside, use insect repellent that has DEET or Icaridin on clothes and exposed skin (avoiding eyes and mouth). Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Limit your time outdoors during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Repair holes in screens, windows, and doors.
- Maintain areas where mosquitoes are most likely to lay their eggs:
 - Change water in bird baths every other day;
 - Keep pool pumps and pumps in ornamental ponds circulating;
 - Cover openings in rain barrels; and
 - Empty standing water regularly from:
 - Clogged eavestroughs and gutters
 - Garbage cans

- Flowerpots and saucers
- Wheelbarrows
- Pool covers
- Wading pools
- Toys
- Old tires

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