

## Memo

**To: Healthcare Providers**

**From: Infectious Diseases Team**

**Date: October 16, 2024**

**Re: West Nile Virus activity in Haldimand-Norfolk County**



**SCAN Me**

The Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) would like to make you aware of the first case of human West Nile Virus in our jurisdiction.

### Mode of Transmission

West Nile virus (WNV) is transmitted to humans through mosquito bites of infected *Culex* mosquitos. Person to person WNV can occur through blood transfusion and solid organ transplantation. Intrauterine transmission and human milk also have been described as mode of transmission but found to be uncommon.

### Incubation Period

Incubation period is usually 2-6 days but can range from 2-24 days and can be as long as 21 days in immunocompromised individuals.

### Period of Communicability

Viremia in immunocompetent individuals can last less than 7 days.

### Clinical Information

Particularly during the summer months, WNV disease should be considered in any patient with:

- febrile or acute neurological illness
- recent exposure to:
  - mosquitoes
  - blood transfusion
  - organ transplantation
- Infants born to mothers infected with the virus during pregnancy or while breastfeeding

There are three clinical manifestations of WNV:

1. Asymptomatic: The majority of WNV cases are asymptomatic.
2. Non-neurological: About 20% of infected persons develop the usually less severe symptom known as WNV fever. This presents with a mild flu-like illness with fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes or other non-specific symptoms that last several days. Some may present with symptoms of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, eye pain or photophobia.
3. Neurological: WNV neurological symptoms can present on less than 1% of infected patients and those are meningitis, encephalitis as well as conditions similar to acute flaccid paralysis, and Parkinson's disease.

## Prevention Measures

The following are measures to control mosquito breeding and transmission of WNV in the human population:

- Removing standing water in places such as bird baths, eaves troughs, flowerpots, discarded tires, etc.
- Wearing protective clothing including long pants and long sleeve shirts.
- Using mosquito repellent containing DEET, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Eliminating mosquito entry into the home

## Testing Information

Please find the testing information for WNV in the following link:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Laboratory-Services/Test-Information-Index/West-Nile-Virus-Serology>

## Reporting

WNV is a reportable disease, and any suspect cases should be report to the health unit at 519-426-6170 ext. 3438.

Thank you for your continued diligence in working collaboratively with the health unit.

The Infectious Disease Team

For questions, please contact our Infectious Disease Team at 519-426-6170 ext. 3438 or e-mail us at [idt@hnhss.ca](mailto:idt@hnhss.ca) For after hours and weekends, please contact on-call at 1-877-298-5888