

West Nile Virus found in Aurora mosquito traps

By Brock Weir

The Region of York is urging residents to protect themselves after three mosquito traps ? including one in Aurora ? tested positive for West Nile Virus last week.

A trap located on Yonge Street at Murray Drive tested positive for the mosquito-borne illness, along with examples in Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

?Ongoing surveillance tells us West Nile virus is present in the community and protection against mosquitos remains important,? said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health. ?By taking simple precautions, residents can reduce the risk of West Nile virus and exposure to mosquitos.?

These precautions include cleaning up standing and stagnant water on properties ? such as in bird baths, flower pots, pool covers, eavestroughs, and clogged getters ? and ensuring your window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.

Outside the home, you are being urged to cover up by wearing protective clothing ? including socks, long-sleeved shirts and jackets ? as well as donning lighter colours when possible to detract mosquitos. Insect repellent is also recommended, as is minimizing outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when the bugs are most active.

?As part of York Region's 2017 West Nile virus (WNV) Control Plan, York Region Public Health larvicides catch basins to interrupt mosquito breeding, educates residents on self-protection, investigates human cases and conducts surveillance,? says the Region.

?York Region treats catch basins along Regional and municipal roads and other stagnant public water sources, including roadside ditches. Private backyard catch basins are treated upon request.?