Northwestern Health Unit
www.nwhu.on.ca

For Immediate Release
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Protect Yourself from the West Nile Virus

The Northwestern Health Unit is reminding the public to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Mosquitos are a nuisance, and they can also be carriers of West Nile virus. West Nile virus is mainly transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Kurt Casey, Public Health Inspector with the Health Unit says, "The chances of getting West Nile virus from an infected mosquito are low. While anyone can become infected with West Nile virus, the risk of severe illness increases with age".

Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms or flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and fatigue. Sometimes the virus causes severe illness, including meningitis and encephalitis.

You can protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- Wear light colored clothing, a long sleeved shirt, long pants and a hat to go outside when mosquitos are most active (dusk to dawn).
- Use an insect repellant with DEET. Ensure that the proper guidelines are followed for use with infants, children, adults and pregnant women.
- Get rid of as much standing water as you can from around your home and property. Drain water from flower pots, wading pools, old tires and so on. Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls twice a week.
- Make sure your window and door screens are in good repair.

For more information on the West Nile virus in Ontario, you can visit: www.health.gov.on.ca, call your local Northwestern Health Unit or call toll-free at 1-800-830-5978.

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