



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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Prevent insect and tick bites, prevent disease

Enjoying the outdoors is an important part of staying healthy. The Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) encourages the public to stay safe while outdoors by protecting themselves from insect and tick bites. Some insects and ticks in our area may carry diseases and can pass the illness on to humans through their bite. There are many ways to prevent bites, reducing your chance of illness.

People can reduce the chance of getting bitten by wearing light coloured long pants and long sleeved shirts, tucking their pants into their socks, and using insect repellent with DEET. Kurtis Casey, Public Health Inspector at the NWHU provides more tips: "Get rid of as much standing water as you can from around your home and property to remove potential insect breeding grounds, and check yourself, your children and pets for ticks daily".

Although the risk of diseases like West Nile virus from mosquitoes or Lyme disease from ticks is low in our region, a risk is always present. "The number of disease spreading insects and ticks is low, but any one bug may carry disease. Fewer bites always means lower risk", says Donna Stanley, Manager of Infectious Diseases at the NWHU. The health unit continues their vector-borne disease risk assessment activities this year including tick collection, and mosquito trapping.

For more information about preventing insect and tick bites, visit www.nwhu.on.ca or contact your local Northwestern Health Unit office.

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