

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
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TO: Halton Physicians

Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)
Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery
Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: September 5, 2018

RE: Confirmed Human WNV Case Reported in Halton

A confirmed case of West Nile virus (WNV) illness has been identified in a resident of Halton Region from Burlington.

The confirmed case serves as a reminder to consider WNV in your differential diagnosis when working up febrile illness with or without neurological involvement.

Mosquito pools positive for WNV have been detected in all areas of Halton (to date 25), signifying increased risk for WNV human illness. The risk will likely stay elevated until the advent of hard frosts in autumn.

The incubation period for clinical illness is 2 to 14 days (possibly longer in immunocompromised persons). Symptoms have a sudden onset and may include headache, malaise, fever, myalgia, chills, vomiting, rash, fatigue, and eye pain. Neurological involvement can include meningitis, encephalitis, tremors, myoclonus, ataxia, and asymmetric weakness or flaccid paralysis. WNV infections are asymptomatic 75–80% of the time; cause West Nile fever in 20–25%; and result in neuroinvasive disease in less than 1%.

For diagnostic testing, acute and convalescent serology of clotted blood or serum is recommended. For neuroinvasive illness add a CSF sample for serological testing (WNV IgM). Use a Public Health Ontario Laboratory (PHOL) requisition form and enter “West Nile virus” under test description. Indicate the test is for “suspect West Nile virus”, symptoms, date of any significant mosquito exposures, symptom onset date, travel history, and whether the test is for acute or convalescent serology testing.

For additional WNV information visit the PHO webpage at www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/West-Nile-Virus.aspx. Laboratory information is available at www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/LAB_SD_011_West_Nile_virus_interpreting_serology_results.pdf.

For current WNV surveillance data see <http://www.halton.ca/WNV>.

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked * should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Other diseases can be reported the next working day. Dial 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit www.halton.ca/physicians. To sign up for important updates by email, visit www.halton.ca/physicianupdates.

If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.