

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments

FROM: Dr. Deepika Lobo, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: July 27, 2020

RE: West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease

QUICK FACTS

- Halton Region Public Health has identified one West Nile virus (WNV) positive mosquito pool in Oakville. Human WNV cases often follow 0 to 6 weeks after the first positive mosquito pool.
- Halton Region Public Health has temporarily suspended its tick submission program. Ticks removed from a patient can be placed in a screw cap container and retained until the program has resumed or patients can be referred to www.etic.ca to help identify the tick.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- **WNV diagnostic symptoms and testing:**
 - Incubation period for WNV ranges from 2 to 14 days.
 - Most WNV are asymptomatic, but approximately 20% to 25% of infected individuals develop non-neurological symptoms (West Nile fever), which present as a mild, flu-like illness with fever, headache and myalgia, occasionally with a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes.
 - Less than 1% of WNV infections develop neuro-invasive disease.
 - Acute and convalescent serology of clotted blood or serum is recommended; For neuro-invasive illness, also submit a cerebrospinal fluid sample for serological testing (WNV IgM).
 - Requisitions should indicate “West Nile Virus – Serology” as well as symptom onset date and any travel history.
- **Lyme Disease testing:**
 - Serologic testing in very early Lyme disease is not sensitive. A thorough history of travel and activities that increase potential exposure to ticks is very important for diagnosis.
 - Early Lyme disease symptoms may include an erythema migrans (EM) rash at the site of the bite 1 to 2 weeks after infection, fatigue, headache, and arthralgia.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Public Health Ontario, West Nile Virus](#)
- Additional laboratory information – [WNV Lababstract June 2013](#)
- [Public Health Ontario, Lyme Disease -- Serology](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES – IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS OR DIDN'T RECEIVE IN FULL, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA FOR ELECTRONIC COPY.