

# Region kicks off West Nile mosquito larviciding program

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Halton Region has begun its annual mosquito larviciding program aimed at reducing the risk of West Nile virus (WNV) in its communities.

The initiative is part of Halton's West Nile virus public education and preventative program.

Larviciding is only one part of our comprehensive West Nile virus program, which also includes public education, monitoring and surveillance, said Halton Region's Acting Medical Officer of Health Dr. Daniela Kempkens in a release sent Monday (May 15).

The region's website defines larvicide as a type of pesticide that kill insect larvae before they develop into adult insects. The region uses this practice to control specific species of mosquito in an effort to control the spread of WNV.

The region uses two types of larvicide applied to urban catch basins and areas of standing water. Methoprene larvicide is used for catch basins and is distributed in pellet or brick form, while Bacillus Thuringi-

ensis Israelensis (BTI) is utilized for standing or stagnant water and applied in granular form.

Despite being considered very low risk to people, animals and the environment, these pesticides are only used on publicly owned lands as the region is prohibited from treating on private property.

Residents are allowed to treat standing or stagnant water with larvicide on their own properties, but require a permit from the Ministry of Environment to treat municipal catch basins even when on private property.

Do not put larvicides into a catch basin. It is illegal and can only be done by a licensed pest control operator with a permit from the Ministry of Environment, warns the region.

As the larviciding program applies only to public lands, the health department is encouraging residents to help protect themselves and their families by taking the following steps.

**Cover up.** Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants with tightly-woven fabric.

**Avoid being outdoors** from early evening to morning when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, as well as at any time



Halton Region has launched its annual larviciding program to help mitigate the risk of the West Nile virus within the community.

Photo by Darren Phillips / Torstar Network

in shady, wooded areas.

**Reduce mosquito breeding sites** around your home by getting rid of all water-filled containers and objects. Change the water in bird baths at least once per week.

**Use an approved insect repellent**, such as one containing DEET or Icaridin.

Ensure your window and door screens are tight and do not have holes, cuts or other openings.

The region provides a map of all locations of standing water sites on public property where larvicide is applied at halton.ca/wnv



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