

First confirmed instances of West Nile Virus in Halton this year

Continued from page 15

lies.

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

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

- Avoid being outdoors from early evening to morning when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, as well as at any time in shady, wooded areas.

- Make sure your window and door screens are tight and without holes, cuts or other openings.

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

According to the Gov-

ernment of Canada's website, symptoms of West Nile can range from mild to severe with 70-80 per cent of those infected showing no symptoms at all.

If present, symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, mild rash, swollen lymph glands and usually first appear within two to 15 days after infection.

"Anyone infected with West Nile virus can be at risk of developing more severe symptoms and health effects. Adults 50 years or older and those with underlying conditions or weaker immune systems, however, are at greater risk," says the Canadian government on its website.

"Very few people (fewer than 1 per cent of people infected with the virus) will develop severe symptoms and health effects. In many of these cases, the infection can affect the central ner-

vous system. This is the nervous system tissues in the brain and spinal cord," it adds.

Severe symptoms include a rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, nausea or vomiting (sometimes both), difficulty swallowing, drowsiness, confusion. Other severe symptoms may include loss of consciousness, lack of coordination, muscle weakness and/or paralysis.

The region has provided residents a map showing the locations of standing water sites that have had larvicide applied this year and can be found at halton.ca/wnv.

To report standing water at public facilities, a dead crow, or for more information about West Nile virus, visit halton.ca/wnv or call 3-1-1. Residents can also email wnv@halton.ca as an additional resource.

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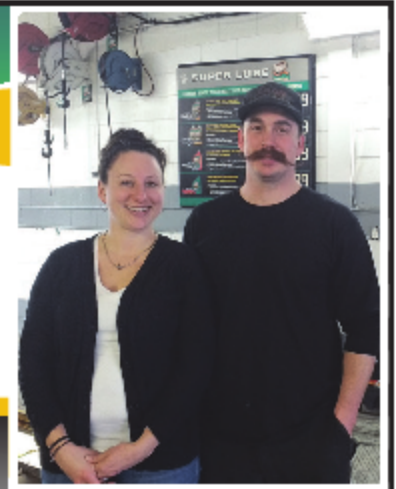
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