

More mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus in Halton

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The Region of Halton is advising residents of another test batch of mosquitoes found to carry West Nile virus, bringing the total up to five positive batches in the region so far this summer.

A release posted to the region's website on July 20 says the latest positive batch was discovered in Milton. The region says it also discovered four batches testing positive in Oakville.

This follows a recent report of three dead crows found in Milton which also tested positive for West Nile virus last month.

"The Halton Region Health Department works diligently to reduce the risk of West Nile virus in our community through both education and preventive programs such as larviciding," said Halton's acting medical officer of

health Dr. Daniela Kempkens in the release.

The release added the types of mosquitoes that can transmit the virus to humans prefer to breed in urban areas in pretty much anything holding standing water.

The region also offered a number of steps residents can follow to help protect themselves and their families from the disease (See sidebar).

In its annual infectious diseases report, the region reported one human case in 2016, down from eight confirmed cases in 2015.

According to Health Canada, most people infected with the virus show no symptoms at all.

"Symptoms can range from mild to severe. Most people (70 per cent to 80 per cent) who are infected with West Nile virus have no symptoms."

Mild symptoms first appear within two to 15 days and can include fever,



The Toronto Star photo

Some of the species of mosquitos that carry the West Nile Virus.

headache, body aches, mild rash and swollen lymph glands.

"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 un-

derlying conditions or weaker immune systems, however, are at greater risk," adds Health Canada on its website.

Severe symptoms occur in fewer than one per cent of cases. Serious symptoms include severe headache,

high fever, stiff neck, nausea or vomiting (sometimes both), difficulty swallowing, drowsiness, confusion, loss of consciousness, lack of co-ordination, muscle weakness and paralysis.

"We can all work together

to keep our community safe and protect ourselves from West Nile virus by removing standing water sites that breed mosquitoes and covering up or applying DEET or Icaridin when outside during dusk and dawn," said Kempkens.

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