

**Mosquitoes
test positive in
Oshawa for
West Nile virus**

Durham Region graphic with blue abstract background and yellow banner reading "Health Department News" Whitby, Ontario - Durham Region Health Department has received notification that a batch of adult mosquitoes collected in Oshawa have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). This is the second mosquito batch in Durham Region to test positive for WNV this season; the first was in Ajax earlier in July.

The positive batch of mosquitoes was collected from one of the Health Department's mosquito trap sites located in Oshawa. Every week between June and September, the Health Department sets mosquito traps across the region and submits mosquitoes for laboratory testing.

WNV is a mosquito-borne disease that is spread to humans via the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on the blood of a bird that carries the virus.

The disease is not passed from person to person, nor from bird to person. Most people who contract the virus will experience mild illness including fever, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting, and rash on the chest, stomach or back. More serious symptoms can include muscle weakness, stiff neck, confusion, tremors, numbness, and sudden sensitivity to light. Symptoms usually develop between two and 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Although the risk of becoming infected is low, the Health Department recommends that residents take the following precautions to minimize the risk of mosquito bites and the possibility of being infected with WNV: Wear shoes, socks and light-coloured clothing—including long sleeve tops and full-length pants when outside—especially at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are most active. Use insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin (picardin) on exposed skin, following Health Canada's safety tips on using personal insect repellents. Remove standing water from your property where mosquitoes can breed. Ensure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home. The Health Department helps minimize mosquito populations by treating catch basins within Durham Region and other stagnant water sites with a larvicide to help reduce breeding.

DISTRACTION THEFTS ON THE RISE

Durham police is warning the community that distraction thefts are on the rise again.

Such thefts involve criminals using distractions such as asking for directions or offering fake jewellery or gifts to swap a victim's real jewelry with fake items. Suspects often work in pairs or trios and often use a vehicle.

Common Tactics
Hugging or touching while complimenting your jewelry, offering gifts, attempting to place fake jewelry on you.
Distracting you with a map or phone while an accomplice steals, or asking for directions to hospital or place of worship.
Claiming to be a friend, relative or member of the same group to gain trust.
Ways to protect yourself
Stay alert in public spaces and be wary of engaging with strangers who approach you unexpectedly.
Decline hugs or handshakes from strangers and step back if someone invades your personal space.
You are not obligated to engage with strangers, if something doesn't feel right walk away or seek help.

Notify police of suspicious people. Share details with senior loved ones and neighbours and community to raise awareness.
Projecting an assertive image that conveys you know where you're going. Even if you are lost, pretend. Avoid isolated areas such as parking lots, garages or alleyways, and stick to well-lit, high-traffic areas.

Don't let people get too close, even if they appear to have a reason, such as asking for the time.

Dress so you can move with ease. Consider wearing clothing and shoes you can move quickly in. Take only what you need while on the go, overloading yourself can make you appear vulnerable to a thief.

If you think you're being followed by a person or a car, switch directions or cross the street. Walk towards an open store, lit house or an area with other people. Tell others where you are going and when you're expected to arrive/return. Arrange a check in with them if you'd like.
If you must talk on the phone while walking don't get lost in conversation. Pay attention to traffic, people and where you're going. Keep in

mind the information you might be giving out when talking on your phone in public.

Transit Users
Have your fare ready and easily accessible. Don't open and rummage through your purse or wallet at the bus stop.

If possible, sit near the front of the bus, especially late at night when there are not a lot of passengers.

Keep your possessions on your lap. Pay attention and avoid sleeping, cleaning out your purse or pockets, playing on your phone or listening to music too loud. If someone is bothering you, don't be afraid to tell the driver and move seats.

Drivers
Have your keys ready and in hand when you leave the building and be alert when approaching your car. Look around at the other cars parked nearby.

If someone is loitering near your car, do not approach. Go back inside and wait or have someone accompany you to the car.

Enter your car quickly and lock the door as soon as you're inside.

If you are followed, drive to a public place and honk the horn to attract attention. Always leave your car locked and empty of possessions, even small change.

Remain alert and vigilant, and always be aware of your surroundings.

Think about where you're going and plan your route before you leave. If possible, pick areas that are well lit and are high traffic areas in case you need assistance.

Trusting your own instincts is important, if a situation seems wrong, instinct can be the best personal safety tool. Always prioritize your safety. Your safety is more important than any property a thief is trying to steal.

If you are confronted, try to remember a description of the suspect and vehicle and, if possible, write this information down. If someone demands your property and displays or implies they have a weapon, do not resist.



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