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To contact the Medical Officer of Health, call 625-5965 or email: moh@tbdhu.com

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## **FIRST REPORTED PROBABLE HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN THE REGION**

A resident from the Dryden area is the first reported probable human case of West Nile Virus in the region. Further testing and investigation by the Northwestern Health Unit will confirm the preliminary results.

Thunder Bay District Health Unit's surveillance for West Nile Virus has identified several dead birds infected with West Nile Virus, but to-date, no positive mosquito pools or human cases have been confirmed.

However, because of geographic proximity, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit is requesting continued surveillance by Physicians and Emergency Departments in this region.

Transmission of the virus occurs when mosquitoes that are infected with West Nile Virus bite humans and rarely, from human-to-human via breast milk, intrauterine infection, organ transplant or receipt of blood components. There is no direct person-to-person transmission.

The incubation period is usually 3 – 12 days.

Approximately 80 per cent of people bitten by an infected mosquito do not show any symptoms. Of those who show symptoms, most will experience mild illness including fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting and rash on chest, stomach or back. Less than one percent of infected people will experience serious symptoms including high fever, severe headache, muscle weakness, stiff neck, and confusion.

West Nile virus is a **reportable disease** (Ontario Regulations 559/91 Health Protection and Promotion Act). It must be reported **immediately to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit**.

**For more information on case definitions and laboratory testing, please contact our Infectious Disease Department at 625-8318.**

Sincerely,

Darlene Binette  
Manager, Infectious Disease Program