

West Nile found in Belleville

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH) has found West Nile in the Belleville area.

Mosquitoes carrying the virus were found in August. It was the first time West Nile was reported during the summer season.

HPEPH keeps an eye on mosquitoes with carbon dioxide baited light traps in 17 locations across Hastings and Prince Edward Counties. It reported it ships the caught insects to a laboratory where they are tested for West Nile virus.

HPEPH reported the virus is carried by mosquito'ss which feed on infected birds. It then spreads to people and animals through the mosquito's bite. It can't be spread through person-to-person contact.

Many people don't show symptoms of the West Nile virus, but they can include fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, confusion, severe headache, sudden sensitivity to light, tremors, numbness, or vision loss.

HPEPH recommended staying indoors during peak mosquito activity at dawn and dusk. It also said to wear light-coloured clothing and long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks and a hat to deter mosquito bites. People can also apply insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin.

HPEPH suggested local residents should get rid of standing water around their homes where mosquito'ss might lay their eggs.