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ONTARIANS URGED TO BE ON GUARD AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS
Important Precautions Should Be Taken To Avoid Mosquitoes

TORONTO – The summer season is mosquito season and it’s just as important as ever to protect yourself and your family against West Nile virus, Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, said today.

“The steps to minimize your risk of getting West Nile virus are easy to take. We want to encourage all Ontarians to take measures to ensure they have a safe and healthy summer,” Dr. Basrur said. “It’s impossible to predict whether it will be a mild year or a severe year for West Nile virus, so take the necessary precautions to protect against mosquito bites.”

Some of the more common ways to avoid mosquito bites include:

- Clearing eavestroughs and removing stagnant water
- Using federally registered personal insect repellents, such as those containing DEET
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when going outside especially between dusk and dawn.

“There are mosquitoes in our forests, in the countryside and in our cities so these steps should be taken whether you’re in an urban setting or in a rural area,” Dr. Basrur said. “It’s important to take extra precautions around dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.”

Information on West Nile virus is available through the ministry’s website, www.health.gov.on.ca, or www.HealthyOntario.com. Ontarians can also phone Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY 1-866-797-0007) or their local public health unit.

Last year, there were 101 cases of West Nile virus in Ontario, up from 14 the year before.

Members of the media:

John Letherby
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
(416) 314-6197

Members of the general public: (416) 327-4327, or (800) 268-1154

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