



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

655 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R4

Tel 604.707.2400
Fax 604.707.2401
www.bccdc.ca

September 6, 2023

ALERT: West Nile Virus Case Detected in BC

The BC Centre for Disease Control is alerting healthcare professionals to a case of West Nile Virus (WNV) detected in the province. The case is a resident of Vancouver Island who travelled to areas outside British Columbia (BC) where WNV is known to be circulating. Local acquisition of WNV is unlikely but cannot be ruled out; therefore, we are communicating these findings out of an abundance of caution.

The risk of WNV in British Columbia remains very low. In the past 10 years, there have only been two human cases of WNV who did not report travel outside of the province (one case in 2013 and a second in 2017). Including travel-acquired cases, the total number of WNV cases in BC has ranged from [0-2 cases per year](#) over the past ten years.

Several other jurisdictions in Canada are reporting an increase in activity of mosquitoes that can carry WNV this year. The most recent [situation update](#) published by the Public Health Agency of Canada, which includes data up to August 5th, 2023, reported 30 positive mosquito pools detected in Manitoba and 71 positive mosquito pools detected in Ontario.

In addition to mosquito monitoring, WNV activity is also assessed using bird and equine surveillance. WNV has been detected this year in wild birds in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec and equine cases have been reported in Idaho, Oregon, and Montana.

To date, no bird or animal cases of WNV have been detected in BC this year.

The best way to lower the risk of acquiring WNV is by avoiding mosquito bites: take precautions when outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, wear long sleeves and long pants, use mosquito repellent, and remove standing water on your property that may serve as mosquito breeding sites.

Although most people infected with WNV will not show symptoms, we encourage healthcare professionals to familiarize themselves with the [clinical signs and symptoms](#) and [laboratory testing information](#) for WNV and **consider WNV in their differential diagnosis** particularly for older adults and immunocompromised people reporting compatible symptoms and exposures.

For additional information on WNV, please visit our website at bccdc.ca.