

June 30, 2010

**WEST NILE VIRUS
UPDATE #3**

Manitoba Health reports that the analysis of the adult mosquitoes trapped for the week of June 20 found increased numbers of *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes in some communities in southern Manitoba, but overall numbers remained low. None of the mosquitoes collected to date have tested positive for West Nile virus. Preliminary trap information for the week of June 27, indicate that the numbers of *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes have increased throughout southern Manitoba. Although the numbers of *Culex tarsalis* are still relatively low, numbers are anticipated to continue to increase in the coming weeks.

Culex tarsalis mosquitoes are the mosquitoes most likely to carry West Nile virus. It is possible that there are some infected *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes in southern Manitoba at this time; the risk of exposure to West Nile virus is beginning to increase. The risk of being bitten by a mosquito carrying West Nile virus is expected to continue to increase in the coming weeks.

Most of the mosquitoes collected have been nuisance mosquitoes, which do not carry West Nile virus. Weekly average trap counts of *Culex tarsalis* by regional health authority are available on the province's West Nile virus website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/wnv.

The province offers a cost-shared larviciding program for municipalities and communities to take steps to help control *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes. Under the program, 75 per cent of costs are covered by the province and 25 per cent are covered by the participating community. To date this year, 55 communities are participating in the program.

Information on the risk of West Nile virus will continue to be provided to the public throughout the summer in a media campaign and at various fairs and festivals. Manitobans can also check the West Nile virus website regularly for up-to-date data and information.

Manitobans can reduce mosquitoes around their home by reducing standing water. To prevent the development of *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes, homeowners can:

- clean eavestroughs and regularly empty bird baths and other items that might collect water,
- ensure rain barrels are covered with mosquito screening or are tightly sealed around the downspout,
- clear yards of old tires or other items that collect water, and
- improve landscaping to prevent standing water around the home.

Manitobans can reduce the risk of mosquito bites by:

- reducing the amount of time spent outdoors during peak mosquito hours between dusk and dawn;
- using appropriate mosquito repellent;
- wearing light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing; and
- maintaining door and window screens so they fit tightly and are free of holes.

For more information about West Nile virus, contact Health Links–Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free). Trap count information is updated weekly and available on the Manitoba Health website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/wnv.

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Contact: Matt