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First confirmed case of EEEV detected by Wellington-Dufferin-Public-Health

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A rare but potentially serious mosquito-borne virus has infected a horse in the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) region.

A confirmed case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEEV) has been detected in a horse in Wellington County. It's the first case of EEEV in the region. No human cases have ever been reported.

The infected horse had no travel history, which indicates EEEV is present locally.

While EEEV mainly affects horses and poses low risk to humans, severe cases can be life-threatening, according to the WDGPH.

EEEV symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, weakness, seizures and behavioural changes.

While there is a low risk of horse-to-human transmission, there is no risk of human-to-human transmission.

?Although EEEV is rare in humans, this local case highlights the ongoing presence of mosquito-borne viruses and the importance of staying protected,? said Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, associate medical officer of health for WDGPH.

?We remain proactive in monitoring and controlling mosquito populations in our region, but everyone should take basic steps to avoid mosquito bites.?

The WDGPH is asking the public to reduce their risk of contracting a mosquito-borne illness by wearing light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants, especially outdoors at dawn and dusk.

Using Health Canada-approved mosquito repellent can also reduce the risk of mosquito bites.

Repairing window/door screens and draining standing water from a property can be helpful as well.

WDGPH conducts surveillance of mosquitoes throughout the region to monitor for EEEV and West Nile virus.