

Health Unit Media Release

Date: May 6, 2005



Contact: Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health (613) 345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853

WEST NILE VIRUS – DEAD BIRD SURVEILLANCE

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is once again asking for the public's assistance to report bird deaths found within the tri-county area. We are requesting that the public report to the Health Unit all sightings of **dead crows, blue jays and ravens** found on their property.

If you do not know what type of bird you have, you can view pictures of blue jays, crows and similar birds on our Website at www.healthunit.org.

All sightings of dead crows and blue jays found within Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties should be reported to the Health Unit by telephoning 1-800-660-5853 during office hours or (613) 345-5685. This surveillance will provide the earliest possible indication of the virus in our area.

During office hours, Health Unit staff will make an assessment of the dead bird's condition during initial contact and record particular information of your sighting. Some selected dead crows or blue jays may be picked up by Health Unit staff and submitted to the laboratory for testing of the virus.

The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit will be assessing only crows and blue jays reported within the Health Unit areas' geographic boundaries. Citizens living outside Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties should contact their respective public health units regarding their health unit's dead bird surveillance program.

After the initial assessment, if the bird is not suitable for testing, you may dispose of the bird in the following manner:

- Dead birds should be disposed of by double bagging and placing the carcass in a regular garbage disposal system or buried with a minimum of two feet of soil cover.
- Use a shovel or rubber gloves when handling dead birds.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use a hand sanitizer.

In 2004 the virus was identified in one crow within Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties. To date no positive mosquitoes have been identified within our region and we have had no human cases reported.

Please do not bring dead birds to any of the offices of the Health Unit. Dead birds directly submitted by citizens will not be accepted at any of the Health Unit offices.

For further information on West Nile Virus, please contact our office at 613-345-5685 or visit our website at www.healthunit.org.

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