



MEMORANDUM

Date: 6/26/2025
To: Colleagues
Re: Routine Organ Donor Testing for West Nile virus (WNV)

Dear Colleagues,

WNV is a seasonal infection in Canada typically causing human infections during the summer or early fall. Most infections acquired in Canada have occurred in August to late September. In 2009, WNV infected mosquitoes and human cases were first identified in the Okanagan. There were no locally acquired human or animal WNV cases identified between 2019 and 2022. In 2023, one travel-related human case was reported; however, no animals tested positive for WNV in BC. Please note that there has been no active mosquito surveillance performed since 2015 in BC. Sporadic human, mosquito and animal WNV cases continue to be reported every year in neighboring US states, such as Washington.

WNV can be transmitted by blood products or organ donations from a WNV infected donor, typically during the incubation period, which is approximately 3 to 14 days after infection. As a result, Canadian Blood Services tests all blood products for WNV RNA. The decision as to when to perform seasonal WNV testing of solid organ and hematopoietic stem cell donors is based on a risk assessment of the transmission probability. For example, WNV testing of donors is not recommended in BC during the fall and winter months (October to June) when mosquitoes, the disease vectors, are unlikely to be present. **This year, routine WNV testing of donors will commence 30 June, 2025.**

Please note that if the donor has a WNV risk factor outside the seasonal testing timeframe, such as travel to or residence in a location that has year-round WNV transmission (including California, Florida, and other Southern U.S. states), PCR testing will be performed upon request.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have any concerns.

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