



Chronology of West Nile Virus Measures Implemented by Canadian Blood Services 2002-2004

December 12, 2002 – Canadian Blood Services implements a precautionary withdrawal of blood products collected in Ontario in June, July, August and September.

February 20, 2003 – Canadian Blood Services announces the selection of Roche Diagnostics as the supplier for its investigational WNV blood screening test. The goal for implementation of the test is July 1, 2003, before human cases are expected.

Winter 2003 – Canadian Blood Services builds a stockpile of frozen blood products collected in the winter, when the risk of WNV is low, for use in the summer, when the risk is higher. The stockpile is considered particularly important in case the test cannot be implemented as quickly as anticipated.

April 3, 2003 – After consulting widely with stakeholders and experts, Canadian Blood Services announces its action plan for 2003, which includes a variety of measures, including the introduction of the investigational test, an appeal for donors to build the inventory prior to the test, stockpiling of frozen blood products, collaboration with public health officials on surveillance, and measures to educate donors, doctors and the general public about WNV and the blood system.

May 20, 2003 – Canadian Blood Services launches a blood donation appeal to build its inventory in case human cases of WNV appear before the investigational blood test can be implemented.

June 17, 2003 – With the investigational Roche test still two weeks from full implementation, Canadian Blood Services introduces its own in-house test as a precaution in case WNV appears in humans in Canada in late June. Canadian Blood Services scientists have been working since the winter to develop the in-house test as a back-up measure to the investigational Roche test.

June 24, 2003 – Canadian Blood Services manages to partially implement the investigational Roche test a week early, enabling testing of blood collected in Ontario, where the risk of WNV is considered to be highest.

July 1, 2003 – Canadian Blood Services begins testing every blood donation using the investigational Roche test.

July 22, 2003 – The test identifies the country's first blood donation containing WNV in Saskatchewan. The blood is withdrawn and the donor deferred from donating again for 56 days.

September 3, 2003 – With Saskatchewan clearly identified as the epicenter of the epidemic, blood collected in the province after August 4 that has not yet been transfused is withdrawn. Canadian Blood Services begins single-unit testing any blood collected in the province.

September 8, 2003 – As a precautionary measure, a clinic in Medicine Hat, Alberta, is cancelled because of the high incidence of WNV in the area.



Fall 2003 – The tally of blood donations in the country testing positive for WNV tops out at 14.

Fall 2003/Winter 2004 – Canadian Blood Services takes part in the international effort to evaluate WNV information generated in 2003 to prepare for the summer of 2004.

Winter 2004 – Canadian Blood Services sets aside a stockpile of frozen plasma for use during the summer of 2004.

April 22, 2004 – Canadian Blood Services announces its WNV plan for summer 2004.

August 3, 2004 – As a precaution, Canadian Blood Services begins performing single-unit testing on 10 per cent of blood donations, targeting areas with WNV activity (the first blood to be tested in this way is collected on August 2 in parts of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan). All other blood donations continue to be mini-pool tested.

August 9, 2004 – With reports of possible human WNV cases in Windsor, Ontario, and southern Saskatchewan, Canadian Blood Services begins single-unit testing all blood collected in Windsor-Essex County and the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

August 24, 2004 – With reports of probably human WNV cases in Toronto and Winnipeg, Canadian Blood Services begins single-unit testing all blood collected in Toronto and Winnipeg Health Unit regions.

Sept. 2, 2004 – Canadian Blood Services announces that it will begin single-unit testing blood collected in the Ottawa and Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit regions. The decision is made after a possible human WNV case is discovered in an Ottawa man. The man is believed to have contracted WNV while vacationing in the Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit region.

September 24, 2004 - Canadian Blood Services Discontinues Heightened Summer Precautions for West Nile Virus. Added precautions introduced in early August 2004 by in anticipation of a potentially intense West Nile Virus (WNV) season were discontinued when it was clear that the WNV epidemic that had been expected to occur in Canada in the summer of 2004 had not materialized. Testing of every unit continues.

May 17, 2005 – Canadian Blood Services announces its WNV Action Plan for 2005.