



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Collecting and Testing of Dead Birds is an Important Component of Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's West Nile Virus Surveillance Program

Champaign, IL – Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) routinely tests dead birds for West Nile Virus. The results of these tests help determine the extent of West Nile Virus in Champaign County. Since West Nile Virus generally appears and grows in local bird and mosquito populations before it is transmitted to humans, monitoring bird and mosquito populations helps predict when and where humans will be at risk for infection and affords the time to take additional precautions and control measures.

CUPHD invites the help of Champaign County residents to collect dead birds for testing. Please call CUPHD at 217-373-7900 if you discover a dead bird. Please do not handle or bring the bird to a CUPHD location. An experienced member of the CUPHD staff will pick up the bird if it meets the following criteria:

- The bird must be dead and the carcass is in good condition. Birds should be dead no more than 24 hours prior to collection, and should show no signs of advanced decomposition such as maggots, strong odor, and dried or deflated eyes.
- The bird must not show signs of dying of causes other than disease. Birds with obvious injuries such as wounds or missing parts should not be submitted for testing. Likewise, crushed carcasses and birds found along roadways will not be accepted.
- The bird must be an acceptable species. Acceptable bird species include crows, blue

jays, grackles, starlings, robins, cardinals, sparrows, finches, hawks and owls. Species other than those listed above will not be accepted for testing. If you need help identifying the bird species, please refer to the CUPHD website at www.cuphd.org.

If the dead bird meets all these criteria, please call CUPHD Environmental Health at 217-373-7900 to file a report. CUPHD is authorized by the State of Illinois to collect a limited number of birds each season (May 1 – October 15). Once the limit has been met in any given locality, no further birds will be collected.

Any bird not collected by CUPHD for testing should be disposed of properly. Please do not have direct skin contact with the dead bird. Use rubber or latex gloves, a plastic bag over your hands, or utilize a shovel, tongs or other instrument to place the dead bird in a plastic bag. Make sure the beak or claws do not puncture the bag and seal the bag. Place the sealed bag into a second bag and seal that as well. Put the double-bagged bird with trash that will be picked up, or bury it away from water sources. Wash your hands with warm water and soap immediately after disposing of the bird.

For more information about CUPHD's programs and services, visit us on the web at www.cuphd.org.

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