



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

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First Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus in Champaign County

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges
Residents to Take Simple Precautions*

Champaign, IL – A mosquito sample recently collected in Champaign County has tested positive for West Nile virus. Surveillance for West Nile virus in Illinois began on May 1 and includes laboratory tests on mosquitoes, dead crows, blue jays, robins and other perching birds as well as the testing of sick horses and humans with West Nile-like disease symptoms. Citizens who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, robin or other perching bird should contact the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) at 217-373-7900, to determine if the bird meets established criteria required for testing.

“The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District routinely samples local mosquitoes and birds. CUPHD realizes that West Nile virus is a concern for our community, but would like to stress that individuals can avoid West Nile virus by taking personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites.” said Jim Roberts, Director of Environmental Health at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. “CUPHD also encourages residents to be proactive with mosquito control by reducing the number of mosquito breeding sites near their homes.”

Last year 28 of the state’s 102 counties were found to have a West Nile virus positive bird, mosquito, horse or human case. A total of 20 human cases, including one death, of West Nile disease were reported in Illinois in 2008. There were no cases of West Nile virus found in Champaign County in 2008.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of the illness, but some may become ill three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Only about two out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Symptoms of West Nile virus are usually mild and include fever, headache, body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Serious illness, such as encephalitis, meningitis, and death are possible in extreme cases. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

The best way to prevent West Nile virus or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Use prevention methods whenever mosquitoes are present.

- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellants on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, gutters, old tires and any other receptacles. Contact CUPHD at 217-373-7900 to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Public health officials believe that a hot summer could increase mosquito activity and the risk of disease from West Nile virus.

For more information about Mosquito Surveillance and West Nile virus programs or other CUPHD programs and services call 217-352-7961 or visit the web at www.cuphd.org.

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