



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus in Champaign County

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges Residents to Continue to Take Precautions

Champaign, IL – A mosquito sample collected last week in the City of Champaign has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). Additionally, a dead crow collected the last week of July in the City of Champaign also tested positive for West Nile virus (2nd positive bird in Champaign County). “Hot summer temperatures help to create stagnant water with organic matter that is prime breeding sites for *Culex* mosquitoes, the primary vector of WNV. As the number of WNV infected *Culex* mosquitoes increase, the risk of WNV disease-to-humans increases,” said Jim Roberts, Director of Environmental Health at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD).

Late summer is the time of the year that you are most likely to come in contact with a WNV infected mosquito. CUPHD urges residents to take personal actions to avoid mosquito bites when outdoors:

- Avoid times when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- 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.
- Wear shoes and socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.

Since most of the *Culex* mosquitoes are produced locally (typically do not fly more than two miles from its breeding site), CUPHD urges residents to also reduce the number of

mosquito breeding sites around backyards and neighborhoods. 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. CUPHD, along with the City of Champaign, the City of Urbana, and the Village of Savoy, has a *Culex* mosquito abatement program that includes the application of mosquito larvicide to areas of standing water on public property, e.g. catch basins and roadside ditches, in these communities. Contact CUPHD at (217) 373-7900 to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, abandoned swimming pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

As of August 6, 2010, there have been 18 counties in Illinois reporting either a positive West Nile virus bird or mosquito batch. No human cases have been reported.

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. About one in 150 people infected will develop serious illness; encephalitis, meningitis, and death are possible in these serious cases. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

For more information about Mosquito Surveillance and West Nile virus programs, call (217) 373-7900 or visit the web at www.c-uphd.org.

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