



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Increased West Nile Viral Activity in Champaign County**

### ***Champaign-Urbana Public Health District/Champaign County Public Health Department Urges Residents to Continue to Take Precautions***

Champaign, IL – Mosquito samples in Champaign, Urbana, Savoy and St. Joseph have all recently tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). “Although we are seeing cooler temperatures, mosquitoes are still active until the first hard freeze, so it is important for people to continue to protect themselves against mosquitoes,” said Jim Roberts, Director of Environmental Health at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD)/Champaign County Public Health Department (CCPHD).

The best way to prevent WNV infection 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. Precautions include:

- Try to avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, at dawn, dusk and in the early evening.
- When weather permits, wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Apply insect repellent that contains active ingredients which have been registered with the EPA. Consult a physician before using repellents 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. Empty water from bird baths, flowerpots, wading pools, pet dishes and swimming pool covers at least once or twice a week. Remove old tires and other items that could collect water. Contact CUPHD at (217) 373-7900 to report areas of stagnant water.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Only about two people in 10 who are infected with WNV will experience any illness. Illness from WNV is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness such as encephalitis, meningitis and death are possible. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

As of September 26, 2011, there have been 15 counties in Illinois reporting either a positive West Nile virus bird or mosquito pool and 10 human cases reported with one death. Champaign County has reported a positive West Nile virus bird and mosquito pools, but no human cases.

Additional information about WNV can be found on the CUPHD website at <http://www.c-uphd.org/west-nile-virus.html>.

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