



NEWS

R E L E A S E

Illinois Department of Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Human West Nile Virus Positive Case in Illinois For 2012

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has confirmed the first human West Nile virus case reported in Illinois for 2012. The Cook County Health Department reported a female in her 60s became ill earlier this month.

“We are seeing a large increase in West Nile virus activity and this first human case is a good reminder that we all need to take precautions,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “The mosquitoes that typically carry West Nile virus, commonly called the house mosquito, are not as noticeable as the swarms of floodwater mosquitoes we see during rainy summers. Even if it does not look like there are a lot of mosquitoes out, house mosquitoes are stealthy biters and their virus infection rate is increasing rapidly, so make sure to use insect repellent.”

A bird collected in Cook County on May 16, and mosquito batches collected on May 17 and May 18 in DuPage and Cook counties, were the first West Nile virus positive specimens this year. To date, West Nile virus positive birds, mosquitoes and one human case have been reported in 27 counties.

As of July 24 each year	Counties Positive	Birds Positive	Mosquitoes Positive
2012	27	21	631
2011	7	3	49
2010	15	22	105
2009	13	4	55
2008	7	4	73
2007	5	0	183
2006	31	58	550
2005	21	44	376

Typically the first human case of West Nile virus is announced in August each year.

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Last year a total of 19 counties in Illinois reported a West Nile virus positive mosquito batch, bird and/or human case. A total of 34 Illinois residents contracted West Nile virus disease, and three died.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common West Nile virus symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

The best way to prevent West Nile disease 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 practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** exposure - avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
 - 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 where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** - In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report dead birds and areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health's website at www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm. Surveillance numbers are updated every Wednesday afternoon www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance12.htm.

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