



NEWS

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Illinois Department of Public Health

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First Central Illinois West Nile Virus Positive Results For 2012

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reporting the first West Nile virus positive bird detected in central Illinois for 2012. Champaign Urbana Public Health District staff collected a crow on June 12, which tested positive for West Nile virus. 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.

“With hot weather forecasted for this week, we anticipate increased West Nile virus activity across the state. Typically when temperatures increases, so do mosquito activity and the risk of West Nile disease,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “It is important to protect yourself by following the three R’s – **reduce** your exposure to mosquitoes, **repel** them by wearing insect repellent, and **report** areas where mosquitoes typically breed.”

This year, West Nile virus positive birds and/or mosquitoes have been reported in 13 counties – Champaign, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Gallatin, Jackson, Kendall, LaSalle, Madison, Peoria, St. Clair, Stephenson and Will counties (website updates every Wednesday afternoon www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance12.htm). No human cases of West Nile virus have been reported so far this year.

The first West Nile virus positive results in 2011 were collected on June 8 and included two birds from LaSalle County. Last year 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.

Surveillance for West Nile virus in Illinois includes laboratory tests on mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, robins and other perching birds, as well as testing sick horses and humans with West Nile-like disease symptoms. People who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, robin or other perching bird should contact their local health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

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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 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.

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