



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHTENAW COUNTY RESIDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS
Public Urged to Prevent Mosquito Bites and
Use West Nile Virus Hotline to Report Dead Birds

YPSILANTI, Mich., August 23, 2010—Washtenaw County Public Health Department officials today announced that a Pittsfield Township man tested positive for West Nile virus infection late last week. He was bitten by an infected mosquito in his neighborhood during the first week of August and contracted a mild form of the illness called West Nile fever. He has recovered.

This is first human case of West Nile disease identified in Michigan for the 2010 season. County residents are urged to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and to call the **Washtenaw County West Nile Virus Hotline** at **(734) 544-6750** to report dead birds or to receive general West Nile virus information. Hot, dry weather conditions are favorable for amplifying the virus cycle in birds and mosquitoes, particularly in urban and suburban areas. In Michigan, August and September are the months of greatest risk to humans for becoming infected with the West Nile virus.

“Fortunately, we have not traditionally experienced a large number of human cases of West Nile in Washtenaw County. However, most of the cases in previous years were exposed close to the Labor Day weekend,” said Dr. Diana Torres-Burgos, Washtenaw County Medical Director. “Individuals should be particularly vigilant right now in preventing mosquito bites to themselves and their families.”

Most people infected with West Nile virus do not have any symptoms of illness, but one in four will become ill 3-15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. In a few cases, mostly among persons 75 years and older, death may occur. Mild illness from West Nile can include these symptoms: Slight fever, headache, body aches, and sometimes a skin rash and swollen glands. Serious illness from West Nile can include these symptoms: high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, mental confusion, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. If you are experiencing these symptoms, please contact your medical provider.

Nationally, 115 human cases of West Nile virus have been reported in 2010 to date, with three deaths.

Fax: (734) 544-6706
Communicable Disease

Fax: (734) 544-6704
Administration

Fax: (734) 544-6705
Public Health

HEARING IMPAIRED: (734) 994-1733

WEB ADDRESSES: <http://www.ewashtenaw.org>

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>



Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile virus when they feed on infected birds that carry the virus in their blood. People are primarily exposed to West Nile from the bite of a mosquito that is infected with the virus. The presence of dead crows, blue jays, and ravens is a sensitive indicator for the presence of the West Nile virus.

Dead Bird Surveillance

The Washtenaw County Public Health Department asks citizens to report all dead birds to the Washtenaw County West Nile Virus Hotline at (734) 544-6750. Due to budget cuts, dead bird testing is no longer available. However, residents should continue to report any dead birds they see as the sightings are entered into a mapping database to predict the level of virus activity in a particular geographic area.

Personal Protection and Prevention

Since West Nile virus is spread to humans almost exclusively through the bite of an infected mosquito, it is important for individuals to prevent mosquito bites through the following prevention activities:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active (dawn and dusk).
- Wear light colored clothing, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants, if possible.
- Apply insect repellent that contains the active ingredient DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus to exposed skin or clothing. Always following the manufacturer's directions for use. DEET repellent can be used on children 2 months of age and older.
- Avoid applying repellent to the hands of young children who may then transfer the repellent to their eyes and mouth, which has the potential of producing irritation or adverse health effects.
- Take care when opening doors so that mosquitoes don't "hitch a ride" into the house on you, your children, or your pets.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes out of homes and other buildings.
- Empty standing water from buckets, flowerpots, saucers, pools, patio furniture covers, and other similar sites where mosquitoes can lay eggs.
- Remove wet, organic material from your gutters and from low-lying areas in your yard.
- Keep tall weeds trimmed back from areas where you or your children spend time outdoors.

More information about the West Nile virus is available on the following county, state, and national websites:

- westnile.ewashtenaw.org
- www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus
- www.cdc.gov

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