



NEWS



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CONTACT: Lisa Slater
(309) 888-5489 (office)
(309) 838-1599 (cell)

Third mosquito pool tests positive for West Nile Virus ***With Labor Day weekend approaching, don't forget the threat***

BLOOMINGTON –A third mosquito pool has tested positive for West Nile Virus. This one collected from the 61705 zip code area, west of Bloomington city limits. Previous positive mosquito pools came for the 61705 zip code in an area east of Bloomington and the 61737 zip code near Ellsworth. In addition to the positive mosquito pools, McLean County has previously reported two birds testing positive for the virus – the first in July and the second just last week.

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. Culex mosquitoes, also known as the house mosquito, become infected with the virus by feeding on infected birds and produce more WNV-positive mosquitoes. Those mosquitoes then seek blood meals and subsequently infect humans and animals.

Mild cases of WNV can cause a slight fever or headache. Severe infections can lead to high fever, disorientation, and even paralysis or death. Persons at highest risk for serious illness are young children, adults 50 years of age or older and people with compromised immune systems. Anyone concerned about their risk or experiencing symptoms should contact a physician immediately and inform the doctor of any recent mosquito bites.

Residents are again being advised to limit time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn and to take precautionary measures to limit exposure to mosquitoes. Some preventative steps residents can take to reduce their risk of WNV infection through mosquitoes include:

REDUCE exposure:

- ✓ wear protective clothing like long pants and long-sleeved shirts, along with socks and shoes, when outside from dusk until dawn (the time when the Culex mosquito is most active)
- ✓ repair and replace worn or torn screens on doors and windows
- ✓ eliminate stagnant, shallow water weekly to prevent mosquitoes from breeding (including bird baths, flower pots, wading pools, old tires and other receptacles that collect water)

-MORE-

REPEL mosquitoes:

- ✓ apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picardin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, according to label instructions (consult a physician before using repellents on infants)

REPORT dead birds and standing water sources:

- ✓ contact the MCHD to report dead birds and areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may create ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes

As of today, McLean County was one of 49 counties in Illinois with confirmed WNV activity. In Illinois there have been 772 positive mosquito pool samples, 23 positive birds, 2 positive horses or other animals, and 3 human cases of WNV.

WNV human infection occurs primarily in midsummer to early fall, although mosquitoes that can carry the disease may be present from mid-April through October. MCHD surveillance of mosquitoes and birds for WNV infection began in May and will continue throughout the summer to assess the level of immediate risk to humans. MCHD Environmental Health Division has three sites throughout McLean County with mosquito traps that are collected and tested twice a week.

The health department will continue collecting and testing dead birds through mid-October, with the exception of birds from the 61704 and 61726 zip codes. McLean County residents who find a dead bird on their property should:

1. Contact the Environmental Health Division at (309) 888-5482. The department will only collect and test a limited number of birds. Birds eligible for testing must be dead for no longer than 24 hours and have no obvious signs of trauma. Those submitting bird specimens will receive further instructions at the time of the call.
2. To dispose of a dead bird that the health department cannot accept, adults should use gloves or tongs to place the dead bird inside two plastic bags. Residents living within municipal limits should place the bird in the trash. Rural residents who decide to bury the bird should assure that the location is safely away from water sources. Never handle a dead bird with bare hands, and always wash hands with soap and warm water after disposal.

WNV surveillance and prevention efforts in McLean County are funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health. For more information about WNV visit the health department's website at <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/wnv>; or, go to www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm.

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