



NEWS



<http://health.mcleancountyil.gov>

www.facebook.com/mcleanhealth

www.twitter.com/mcleanhealth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 7, 2017

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

Positive Mosquito Pool the first sign of West Nile Virus Presence in McLean County

Mosquitoes collected from 61705 zip code in Bloomington test positive for the virus

BLOOMINGTON – A mosquito pool collected on August 1st from a trap set in the 61705 zip code area has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV), the first positive test for 2017. Through the WNV Surveillance program, the McLean County Health Department's Environmental Health Division establishes mosquito traps at sites throughout McLean County that are collected and tested twice a week. The positive confirmation should serve as a signal to residents that WNV is here in McLean County for the duration of the summer and early fall and taking steps to prevent being bitten is the best protection against contracting the disease.

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 dawn until dusk (the time when the Culex mosquito is most active)
- ✓ repair and replace worn 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)

REPEL mosquitoes

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

REPORT dead birds and standing water sources

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

-MORE-

The virus' symptoms can appear 13 to 14 days after an infection. 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.

Anyone finding a dead bird in McLean County should contact the Environmental Health Division at (309) 888-5482 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, if the bird meets the following testing guidelines:

1. Birds must have died within 24 hours of collection; and accordingly, show no signs of advanced decomposition (maggots, strong odor, dried or deflated eyes).
2. Birds must be free of obvious injuries such as wounds or missing parts, or be in any way crushed or found along roadways.

As of August 7th, 38 counties in Illinois have confirmed WNV activity including 10 positive birds, 563 positive mosquito pools and two positive human cases according to the 2017 Illinois West Nile Virus Numbers at a Glance on the Illinois Department of Public Health website.

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.

###

Background

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.

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.

The health department is authorized to collect a limited number of birds each season. Testing decisions are based on bird species, condition of the carcass, and location of death. If a bird has already tested positive from a location in the county, there is often no need to test additional birds from that locale. Bird species tested include: crow, jay, magpie, raven, sparrow, finch, grackles, starlings, robins, cardinals, hawks and owls. Birds that will not be accepted include: pigeons, ducks, geese, chickens, other large birds and endangered species.

It is extremely unlikely that a person would contract West Nile virus from a dead bird; however, safety precautions are recommended when handling any dead animals. To safely dispose of a dead bird that the health department cannot accept, adults should be mindful of possible leaking fluids, sharp beaks, and claws, and always:

- Wear non-cloth disposable gloves made of rubber or latex, a plastic bag over your hands if gloves are not available, or use a shovel or tongs to pick up the bird and place it in a plastic bag.
- Seal the plastic bag once the bird is in it and place the bag inside a second plastic bag and seal it.
- Place the bird in the trash, if you live within municipal limits.
- Bury the bird in a location that is safely away from water sources, if you are a rural resident
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water immediately after disposing of the bird.



(L) Photo of a MCHD WNV intern separating mosquitoes from a trap collection and (M) The current WNV prevention graphic -- photo illustration by Patrick Larkin and Joe Scott/The Daily Iowan. (R) Two mosquito traps at a McLean County surveillance location.