



FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS ACTIVITY OF 2019 DETECTED IN MICHIGAN

June 21, 2019 – Summer is here and it's time to get out and enjoy the great outdoors. However, District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) is reminding residents that as the weather warms and summer temperatures rise, so do mosquito and mosquito-borne viruses and illnesses.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has confirmed the first West Nile virus activity in Michigan for 2019. The virus was recently found in mosquitoes collected in Saginaw and Oakland counties and a Canada goose in Kalamazoo County. Nationally, there were 2,544 human cases of the virus and 137 deaths reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2018.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus from feeding on an infected bird. Most people who contract the virus have no clinical illness symptoms, but some may become ill three to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include a high fever, confusion, muscle weakness and severe headache. More serious complications may also include neurological illnesses, such as meningitis and encephalitis.

Mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus may breed near people's homes in storm drains, shallow ditches, retention ponds and unused pools. They will readily come indoors to bite if window and door screens are not maintained. 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:

- Using EPA registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, and 2-undecanone; follow the product label instructions and reapply as directed.
- Don't use repellent on children under 2 months old. Instead dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs and cover crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- Wearing shoes and socks, light colored long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors.
- Making sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings.
- Using bed nets when sleeping outdoors or in conditions with no window screens.
- Eliminating all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding around your home, including water in bird baths, abandoned swimming pools, wading pools, old tires and any other object holding water once a week.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/westnilevirus or cdc.gov/westnile.

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