



## West Nile Virus

**West Niles Virus Increased Risk for Infection-** Because the weather has been hot and dry, flood water mosquitoes, which are nuisance mosquitoes, are in low numbers. In contrast, this summer has favored the "Culex" Northern House Mosquito, which is the primary transmitter of West Nils Virus. This mosquito is out at night and if it enters into the home will bite one while sleeping. For 2014, 41 positive birds and 1271 positive mosquito batches were reported in 49 counties, including Cook County, that were detected to have WNV. For 2014 there were 42 cases with 4 deaths.

**The bottom line is to use mosquito repellent when outdoors after dusk. Do not get lulled into a false sense of security with lack of mosquito bites. This is a serious disease! Play it safe!!! - Health Officer**

The mosquito-borne disease, West Nile Virus (WNV), is here to stay. We should be prepared and not panic. According to the *Illinois Department of Public Health*, 21 birds and 1068 positive mosquito batches have been reported in 15 Illinois counties including Cook County that were detected to have WNV. 34 people were infected in 2011 with 3 deaths. 61 people were infected in 2010 with 4 deaths. 5 people were infected in Illinois in 2009, with the first case reported on August 31, 2009.

You can help stop the spread of West Nile Virus by eliminating stagnant water around your home. Eliminating standing water in tires, birdbaths, flowerpots, gutters and downspouts, and covering trash containers is essential. Drain unused swimming pools and cover them. Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water. Change the water in birdbaths at least once per week and store boats upside down to drain rainwater.

If you find a dead bird, use disposable gloves and/or a shovel to place the bird in a bag and discard it in your trash. Avoid direct contact with the bird. There is no need to contact the Village regarding dead birds unless an adult crow or blue jay is found. If you have questions, you may call *Dwight E. Roepenack*, Village Health Officer, at (847) 588-8045. Or contact your local Mosquito Abatement District: If you live west of Harlem Avenue, call the *Northwest District* at (847) 537-2306; if you live east of Harlem, call the *North Shore District* at (847) 446-9434.

Recommendations to prevent mosquito bites include:

- Whenever possible, limit outdoor activity at dusk.
- Wear light-colored clothing that minimizes exposed skin and provides some protection from mosquito bites.

- Make sure door and window screens fit tightly and that all holes are repaired.
- Whenever applying mosquito repellent to exposed skin, always follow label directions. The most effective repellents contain *DEET*, which is an ingredient used to repel mosquitoes and ticks. The more DEET a repellent contains, the longer time it can protect you from mosquito bites. A higher percentage of DEET in a repellent does not mean that your protection is better, just that it will last longer. Based on a recent study: A product containing 23.8 percent DEET provided an average of 5 hours of protection from mosquito bites; a product containing 20 percent DEET provided almost 4 hours of protection; a product with 6.65 percent DEET provided almost 2 hours of protection.
- No definitive studies exist in the scientific literature about what concentration of DEET is safe for children. No serious illness has been linked to use of DEET in children when used according to product recommendations. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other experts suggest that it is acceptable to apply repellent from less than 10 percent to 30 percent concentrations of DEET to infants over 2 months old. Other guidelines cite it is acceptable to use repellents containing DEET on children over 2 years of age. Parents should choose the type and concentration of repellent to be used by taking into account the amount of time that a child would be outdoors, exposure to mosquitoes, and the risk of mosquito-transmitted disease in the area.
- Persons who are concerned about using DEET or other products on children may wish to consult their health care provider for advice. **The *National Pesticide Information Center* can also provide information through a toll-free number: 1-800-858-7378.** There are no reported adverse effects following use of repellent containing DEET in pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- Whenever possible, avoid application of repellent to bare skin; apply it only to your clothing.

While most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness, some may become ill, usually 3 to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. The virus may occasionally cause serious complications. In some individuals, particularly the elderly, the virus can cause muscle weakness, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, coma, or death.

### **Additional Information**

*Illinois Department of Public Health*

*United States Geological Society*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

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