

Aug. 14, 2009

News media calls to David Hass at (630) 682-7979, ext. 7374

DuPage County Health Department reminds residents West Nile virus activity increases during warm weather

Surveillance by the DuPage County Health Department continues to find positive mosquito batches throughout DuPage County with West Nile virus. Environmental Health Services reports that summer weather has been slow to arrive and so have the increases in WNV activity, but the risk is still present and recent hot weather has increased that risk.

The health department reminds people that it's important to remember to take precautions, such as wearing insect repellent and getting rid of standing water around your house, to reduce the risk of becoming infected with West Nile virus. DuPage County residents with questions about West Nile virus may call the health department at (630) 682-7400.

Only about two people in 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Illness from West Nile is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible. Persons older than 50 have the highest risk of severe disease.

Precautions include:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found at the health department's web site at www.dupagehealth.org or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site at www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm.

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

In an emergency go to www.protectdupage.org and tune to WDCB 90.9 FM radio.