

For Immediate Release

June 9, 2017

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West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitos Found in Fairbury

A batch of mosquitos collected in Fairbury, by Livingston County Public Health Department Director of Environmental Health, Donnie Simmons, has tested positive for West Nile virus. Simmons has been in contact with the Fairbury City Superintendents regarding the positive mosquitos. “With the recent rains and the predicted rise in temperatures over the next couple of weeks, mosquito activity will again be on the rise” warns Simmons. Simmons is reminding citizens to take precautions to avoid becoming infected with West Nile virus. “There are some simple steps you can take, like wearing insect repellent and getting rid of standing water around your home, which will help reduce your risk of being bitten by an infected mosquito.”

Surveillance for West Nile virus by the Livingston County Public Health Department includes the collecting of batches of mosquitos and dead birds. The mosquitos are tested at the health department and the birds are submitted to the IDPH laboratory for testing. People who observe a sick or dying bird should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 and immunocompromised individuals are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile Virus.

Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report.

- REDUCE exposure - minimize being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. If you go outside during these times, take precautions. Even if mosquito numbers seem low, it only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to transmit the virus.
- 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 where mosquitoes can breed, such as old tires, buckets and other receptacles, or refresh the water in bird baths, flowerpots and wading pools every couple days.

- REPEL - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- REPORT – report dead birds to your local health department. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government about 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 by logging onto www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/west-nile-virus