

## Press Release

Clinton County Health Department is reporting a positive mosquito batch for West Nile Virus for the towns of Ferrin, Albers, Jamestown & Breese August 29, 2024.

Monitoring for West Nile Virus in Illinois includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, collection of dead birds, as well as testing sick horses and humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, robin or other perching bird should contact the Clinton County Health Department, who will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing. To qualify for testing, birds must be recently deceased with no signs of decomposition or apparent cause of death other than disease.

The Health Department places traps to collect female mosquitoes at seven locations throughout the county within or near populated areas. The traps are collected and tested on a weekly schedule, weather permitting.

### West Nile Virus: Personal Precaution Reminder

Clinton County Health Department would like to remind citizens on ways to protect themselves from West Nile virus exposure. The *Culex pipiens* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito increases in numbers during July and August and the percentage of infected mosquitoes also increase. Consequently, based on data from Illinois and other states, the risk of WNV infection is greatest from August 1 through September 15.

Anyone who is infected can potentially develop West Nile virus disease. However, people 50 years of age or older or who are immunocompromised are at highest risk for West Nile virus disease, but younger persons are also known to have this infection. From now until October, when mosquitoes are most active, persons can reduce the risk of becoming infected by taking the following precautions:

#### To protect yourself

- Cover up. Wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks, when doing outdoor activities. These activities include walking pets, outdoor sports, gardening, camping, hiking and other outdoor activities, especially during dusk to dawn. Tightly woven materials provide better protection.
- Use and insect repellent with DEET. When used according to the manufacturer, insect repellent with DEET is effective. Parents please see below for further recommendations when using DEET on children and infants.
  - An adult should apply insect repellent on young children. Apply it to your own hands and then rub them on your child. Avoid contact with children's eyes and mouth and use carefully around their ears.
  - Do not apply any repellent to infants without consulting a physician.
  - Do not apply repellent to children's hands to avoid ingestion from children's hand-to-mouth activities.
  - Keep all repellents out of reach of children.
- Repair screens in doors and windows. Frequently inspect screen doors and windows. Immediately repair any holes and loosely fitting components.
- Protect infants in carriers. Mosquito netting can be used over infant carriers.
- Stay indoors. When possible, during prime mosquito biting hours from August to October, schedule indoor events/activities.

#### To reduce exposure in your surroundings

- Remove any standing water. Dispose of tin cans, garbage cans and lids, plastic containers, tires, ceramic pots, and other water catching containers from around your home or school.
- Inspect roof gutters. Make sure roof gutters properly drain and are not clogged.
- Inspect swimming pools and other outdoor tubs (saunas, hot tubs). When not in use keep them empty and covered. When covers are used, regularly drain water that settles on them.

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

- **REDUCE** - 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.
- Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered 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 locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

For more information call:

CLINTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
991 Franklin Street  
CARLYLE, IL 62231  
PHONE: 618-594-2723

Last year, 67 Illinois counties reported a West Nile virus positive mosquito batch, bird, horse, and/or human case, up from 44 counties in 2022. Last year, there were 119 human cases of West Nile virus and six deaths reported in Illinois, according to provisional data, compared to 33 human cases and seven deaths in 2022. IDPH notes human cases are underreported and do not reflect the actual number of cases.

General information about West Nile Virus:

West Nile Virus is spread to humans from the bite of an infected mosquito. These mosquitoes most actively bite from dusk to dawn. Most people who are infected with West Nile virus disease either have no symptoms or experience a mild or moderate, short-term flu-like illness. Some persons may also develop a rash, or swollen lymph glands. Severe illnesses may include encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord). People who have symptoms usually become ill 3 days to 3 weeks following the bite of an infected mosquito.

