



2390 West Station Street
Kankakee, Illinois 60901
Phone: 815-802-9400
Fax: 815-802-9391
www.kankakeehealth.org

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Bryan Kennedy
Kankakee County Health Dept.
Environmental Health
(815) 802-9410

KANKAKEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.

MOSQUITO VECTOR PREVENTION PROGRAM

Once again the Kankakee County Health Department is geared up to combat West Nile Virus throughout the County. The department's mosquito vector prevention program will include testing of *Culex* mosquitoes and dead crows, blue jays, robins, cardinals, and mourning doves for West Nile Virus and control of larval mosquitoes of the genus *Culex*, the primary vectors of West Nile Virus and St. Louis Encephalitis. Collection of dead birds began on May 20, 2013; collection of mosquitoes began May 1, 2013. Program personnel will be conducting surveys to locate mosquito production sites. In addition the program will include public informational activities and investigation of mosquito nuisance complaints.

Last year 55 counties in Illinois reported a West Nile virus positive mosquito batch, bird, horse and/or human case. A total of 290 Illinois residents contracted West Nile virus disease, and 12 died; there were four birds and 16 mosquito batches that contained the West Nile virus in Kankakee County.

Because the virus has been present in Kankakee County in the past, health officials recommend individuals take a number of precautions to reduce contact with mosquitoes:

- **REDUCE** exposure. Whenever outdoors between dusk and dawn, wear shoes and socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.
- **REPEL** - When it is necessary to be outdoors, apply insect repellent as indicated on the repellent label. The more DEET a product contains, the longer the repellent can protect against mosquito bites. However, concentrations higher than 50 percent do not increase the length of protection. For most situations 10 percent to 25 percent DEET is adequate. Apply repellents to clothes whenever possible; apply sparingly to exposed skin if label permits. Consult a physician before using repellents on young children.
- **REPORT** - beginning May 20, 2013 report dead birds to the Kankakee County Health Department. Check residential screens, including porches and patios, for tears and other openings and repair, as necessary, to prevent mosquito entry. Eliminate stagnant water in bird baths, ponds, flower pots, wading pools, old tires, and any other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.

Additional information about West Nile Virus can be found on the Kankakee County Health Department's Vector Website at www.kankakeehealth.org/eh or on the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site: www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm.

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