



KANKAKEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Subject: West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitoes

CITY OF KANKAKEE MOSQUITOES POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

It has been confirmed that there has been one pool of mosquitoes in the City of Kankakee, Kankakee County, that has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV).

This is the first pool of mosquitoes to test positive for WNV this year in Kankakee County. As of Tuesday, 13 July 2018, 24 counties in Illinois have had birds and/or mosquitoes that have tested positive for WNV, and one county has had one human test positive for WNV. Last year 63 counties in Illinois reported a West Nile virus positive mosquito batch, bird, and/or human case. In 2017, a total of 90 Illinois residents tested positive for West Nile virus, eight of these cases were fatal. In Kankakee County there were 36 positive mosquito batches, two bird cases, and two human cases of West Nile virus last year. The Kankakee County Health Department urges residents to take necessary precautions while outdoors, but not to restrict their outdoor activities. The best way to prevent WNV is to avoid mosquito bites is:

- Whenever outdoors between dusk and dawn, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.
- When 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. Other approved repellants include picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus. Apply repellents to clothes whenever possible; apply sparingly to exposed skin if label permits. Consult a physician before using repellents on young children.
- Check screens in your home, including porches and patios, for tears and other openings and repair, as necessary, to prevent mosquito entry.
- Eliminate stagnant water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.

The Culex or house mosquito, which can carry WNV, breeds in warm, stagnant water and increases in number early in the summer. West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill 3 to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms can be mild and include fever, headache, and body aches, or can be severe, marked by headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis and, in rare cases, death. Individuals 50 years and older, and those with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe WNV illness, which can lead to hospitalization and death.

Kankakee County's 2018 surveillance for WNV began June 1 and includes collecting dead crows, blue jays, cardinals, robins and mourning doves. The county also collects mosquitoes for testing for WNV. Community member who see sick or dying crows, blue jays, cardinals, robins or mourning doves should contact Kankakee County Health Department, Environmental Health, at 815-802-9410, who will determine if the bird is eligible to be picked up for testing.

Horse owners also should take precautions by minimize exposure of their animals to mosquitoes. There is a vaccine available to protect horses from West Nile virus. While susceptible to the virus, horses are not known to transmit the disease to other horses or to humans.

The best way to prevent West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites by practicing the 3Rs for protection against mosquitoes:

- **REDUCE** the number of mosquitoes and get rid of containers outside that hold water;
- **REPEL** mosquitoes by using insect repellent;
- **REPORT** area where water sits for more than a week

Additional information about WNV can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/>. The Illinois Department of Public Health's WNV hotline number is 1-866-369-9710.

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