

# COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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## The first mosquitoes of the season positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in suburban Cook County

*Protect yourself and your family, Fight the Bite!*

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials confirm mosquitoes recently collected from a trap in Oak Lawn have tested positive for WNV.

“Active surveillance is vital to the prevention of West Nile Virus because it allows us to identify mosquitoes, birds and humans positive for the disease,” said CCDPH chief operating officer Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H. “This allows us to keep our residents informed about the potential increased risk for West Nile Virus in one area or another.”

Mosquitoes may transmit the virus to humans after feeding on a bird infected with WNV. To date, no birds collected have tested positive for the virus and there are no human cases of West Nile Virus in suburban Cook County. CCDPH officials continue to collect dead birds. Call the WNV hotline at 708-492-2650 to report a dead bird.

A positive mosquito pool should result in a heightened awareness. However, the mosquito known for carrying WNV thrives in warm, dry weather which is expected this Fourth of July weekend, so we encourage all residents in suburban Cook County to be cautious. The most effective way to prevent against becoming infected with WNV is to follow some basic steps:

- When outdoors between dusk and dawn, cover skin with lightly colored loose fitting clothing and use mosquito repellent with DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the label.
- Get rid of standing water around your home in pet bowls, flower pots, old tires, baby pools and toys. Water that is allowed to stagnate for three or four days becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Make sure your doors and windows have tightly fitting screens and repair any tears or other openings.
- Keep weeds and grass cut short and keep gutters clean and free of debris.

Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. But illness can occur 3-15 days after an infected mosquito bite and cause symptoms of fever, headache and body aches. The disease can affect all ages, but people over the age of 50 and those with chronic disease, such as heart disease or cancer may be at-risk for serious complications from encephalitis or meningitis. For that reason, people who experience high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches, or a stiff neck should see a doctor immediately.

For more information please visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org), or call CCDPH at 708-492-2000.

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