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Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., MPH
Chief Operating Officer

Second human case of West Nile virus in suburban Cook County

Residents are advised to protect themselves using basic prevention measures

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials confirm a second human case of West Nile virus. A man in his 20s from South Holland became ill earlier this month with the virus; he was hospitalized but was released and is recovering well. This marks the second case of West Nile virus in suburban Cook County. In addition, 220 mosquito pools and seven birds have tested positive for West Nile virus throughout suburban Cook County.

“We are currently seeing an increased risk for West Nile virus infection throughout suburban Cook County,” said CCDPH chief operating officer, Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H. “Residents need to be aware of this risk and take basic precautions to prevent becoming infected with WNV.”

The most effective way to prevent against becoming infected with WNV is to follow some basic steps:

- 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.
- 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.

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, or call CCDPH at 708-633-4000.

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