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

Mosquito pools test positive for West Nile Virus throughout suburban Cook County

Residents are advised to protect themselves using basic prevention measures

Five mosquito pools have now tested positive for West Nile Virus in suburban Cook County. The first positive pool was reported last week in Evergreen Park with a repeat positive test reported yesterday in Evergreen Park along with positive pools in Oak Lawn, Norridge and Glenview. That number is expected to rise throughout the summer months, especially during the hot, dry conditions our area has seen the past few days.

“The Culex mosquito, the primary carrier of WNV in our region, breeds in small pools of stagnant water during hot dry weather,” said CCDPH chief operating officer, Stephen A. Martin, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H. “Residents are likely to have standing water around their homes from all the rain we experienced in May and June. That standing water is a potential breeding ground for these mosquitoes; 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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