



Knox County Health Department
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile Virus Surveillance Begins

Knox County, Illinois - Mosquito-borne diseases pose a continual threat to the nation's health. In response, The Knox County Health Department has begun its efforts to survey West Nile Virus (WNV) in our community.

The Health Department began disease surveillance activities May 1, 2009 and will continue through October 15, 2009. Dead birds will be collected to determine if they are positive for West Nile Virus. The Health Department staff will determine if the bird is suitable for testing. "Dead birds have been proven to be excellent early indicators for the potential presence of West Nile Virus in the area," says Wil Hayes, Director of Environmental Health for The Knox County Health Department.

The Knox County Health Department began gravid trapping, the collection of mosquitos, June 1. There are some things you can do to further protect yourself from mosquito bites. They include:

- Avoid places and times when mosquitoes commonly bite; the hours just before and after sunset and again just before dawn.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when in wooded areas. Keep pant legs tucked into boots or socks.
- Check to see that your mosquito repellent contains DEET, Picardin, or Lemon of Eucalyptus.
- 30% DEET works best for adults; use lower concentrations (10%) for children; contact your child's physician prior to using repellent on infants. When outdoors, apply repellent sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the product's label.

If you observe a suspicious bird, or need more information about West Nile, contact the Knox County Health Department at 309-244-2224 or visit the website at www.knoxcountyhealth.org.