



Knox County Health Department
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile Virus Found in Knox County Mosquito Sample

Knox County, Illinois – Local public health officials announce that Health Department staff have collected mosquito samples testing positive for West Nile Virus. The samples were collected from two different pools, both within Galesburg Township.

“These are the first positive environmental samples collected this year in Knox County,” reports Wil Hayes, Director of Environmental Health for the Knox County Health Department. “Actually,” states Hayes, “we are still fairly early into the season for the Department to have had mosquito pools test positive for the virus.” At this time, IDPH is reporting no human cases and six counties with positive birds, mosquitoes, and/or horses.”

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 three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Illness from West Nile disease is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

Individuals can reduce their risk of West Nile illness and other mosquito-borne diseases by:

- › Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn;
- › When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent;
- › Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens; and
- › Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.

Health Department staff continue to coordinate surveillance for the West Nile Virus throughout the summer months; including, laboratory tests on mosquitoes, dead crows, blue jays and robins, as well as testing of sick horses and humans with West Nile-like disease symptoms.

For more information about mosquito breeding sites or West Nile virus; contact the Knox County Health Department at 309-344-2224; www.knoxcountyhealth.org.