



MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Positive bird is first evidence of West Nile in Kane

The Kane County Health Department is reporting the first evidence of West Nile Virus in Kane County in the 2008 season. Lab tests show that a crow collected July 10 in Batavia had the virus.

While there have not been any reported cases in people in the county so far this year, hot summer weather provides the perfect conditions for the Culex mosquito, which carries the disease.

“As this new result shows, this is the time of the year when we can expect to begin seeing more evidence of West Nile Virus, including human cases,” said Paul Kuehnert, Executive Director of the Health Department. “We urge our residents to be mindful of the risks and take precautions to minimize them.”

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.

Only about two persons out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Illness from West Nile 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.

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The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Use prevention methods whenever mosquitoes are present.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Change water in birdbaths weekly. Properly maintain wading pools and stock ornamental ponds with fish. Cover rain barrels with 16-mesh wire screen. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Last year, Kane County saw 13 human cases of West Nile virus. In 2006 there were four, 17 in 2005, two in 2004, none in 2003 and nine in 2002.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Kane County Health Department's Web site at www.kanehealth.com or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site at www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm. People also can call the IDPH West Nile Virus Hotline at (866) 369-9710 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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