



JACKSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health
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NEWS

FOR RELEASE: July 19, 2018

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WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN JACKSON COUNTY MOSQUITOES

Report Dead Birds to Health Department

Murphysboro, IL – Routine mosquito testing has identified the first batch of mosquitoes positive for West Nile virus in Jackson County in 2018. The mosquitoes were collected on July 18 in and around Murphysboro.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. One out of five people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience illness, with symptoms such as fever, nausea, headache and body aches within 3 to 14 days of the bite. However, serious illness such as encephalitis and meningitis, with lingering complications and even death, are possible. In 2017, there were 90 human cases of West Nile virus in Illinois, including two in Jackson County, with five deaths statewide. One human case has been reported so far this year in Illinois.

Bart Hagston, Environmental Health Director for Jackson County Health Department, cautions, “We are now in the very hot time of year when West Nile virus activity begins to amplify. Residents across Jackson County and beyond should take action to protect themselves from mosquito bites.”

Because West Nile virus activity in *Culex* mosquitoes increases during hot weather, personal protection against mosquitoes is particularly important during this time of the year. Individuals can reduce their risk of West Nile illness and other mosquito-borne diseases by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, report.

REDUCE exposure – avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Keep doors and windows closed. Eliminate sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including wading pools, old tires, and other receptacles. Change bird bath water weekly.

REPEL - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Apply EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions.

REPORT - in communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. Hagston especially encourages Jackson County residents to call the health department to report sick or deceased crows, blue jays, robins or other perching birds. Officials will determine if the bird should be submitted to a lab for West Nile virus testing.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Jackson County Health Department's web site at www.jchdonline.org, click on 'West Nile virus' on the 'A-Z Topics' tab, or call the Health Department at 618/684-3143 for more information.

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