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City of Milwaukee Health Department Reports Mosquitos Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Infected mosquitos serve as a warning sign; city continues seasonal surveillance and prevention program

MILWAUKEE – The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has confirmed that mosquito surveillance in the city has indicated the presence of West Nile virus. The mosquitos were collected and tested as part of the MHD’s seasonal West Nile surveillance and prevention efforts that includes reporting of birds, mosquito samples, and human cases of infection along with placement of larvicide treatments.

“Though the City of Milwaukee Health Department has not seen a confirmed case of West Nile virus in an individual this year, detection of the virus in mosquitos serves as a reminder to all city residents to protect themselves against mosquito bites,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

Most West Nile virus infections in Wisconsin typically occur between June and September, and are transmitted to humans through a mosquito bite. Not all mosquitos carry the virus, and only 20 percent of individuals bit by an infected mosquito will develop symptoms such as fever, rash, headache, and joint pain. Those most susceptible to serious illness and hospitalization associated with West Nile virus are individuals over 50 years of age and those with underlying medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and hypertension. If you experience symptoms of West Nile Virus, contact your health care provider.

The MHD reminds individuals to take steps to prevent mosquito bites, including:

- Limiting time outdoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitos are most active.
- Applying an insect repellent with DEET, IR 3535, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus to clothing as well as exposed skin.
- Preventing mosquitos from breeding by removing stagnant water from areas such as flowerpots, plastic containers, gutters and downspouts. Water in birdbaths and pet dishes should be changed at least every three days. Swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs should be cleaned and chlorinated.
- Trimming tall grass, weeds, and vines as mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours, and landscaping to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.
- Mosquito-proofing your home by fixing holes in screens, windows, and doors.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit www.milwaukee.gov/health.

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