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DuPage County Health Department reports First positive mosquitoes with West Nile virus in 2007

Surveillance by the DuPage County Health Department has found the first three positive mosquito batches with West Nile virus in 2007. Environmental Health Services reports that the first positive mosquitoes were located in Naperville, Lisle and Woodridge today. It is the first West Nile virus activity reported in Illinois this year.

As temperatures climb and the public spends more time outdoors, the health department reminds residents that mosquitoes will not only be an annoying part of the landscape, but possibly a disease-carrying one, as well. Spring is the time to start thinking about protection and prevention of mosquito-borne disease.

The health department began West Nile virus surveillance of mosquitoes in 70 DuPage County locations last month. The health department reported 261 positive mosquito batches in 2006.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird; human illness occurs when an infected mosquito bites a person. Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. But some may become ill three days to 15 days following a bite.

Symptoms can include fever, headache and body aches. People over the age of 50 and those with chronic diseases such as heart disease or cancer may be more at-risk for meningitis or encephalitis, two life-threatening diseases. But, people of any age can contract West Nile illness.

The health department urges everyone to “Fight the Bite” and make sure they are properly protected:

- Apply mosquito repellent containing 20-35 percent DEET primarily to clothing. Concentrations of 10 percent or less are indicated for children. Use sparingly on exposed skin.
- Limit time outdoors when mosquito activity is heaviest (dusk through dawn)
- Keep skin covered if outdoors between dusk and dawn. Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks.
- Be sure screens in homes are intact and tight fitting to prevent entry of insects.
- Keep gutters around home cleared of debris and in good repair.
- Eliminate any containers that may hold water from around the outside of the home. Water that is allowed to stagnate for three or four days becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- If your municipality has a mosquito control program, report areas of standing water to that agency.

“We promote health, prevent illness, and provide quality service”

