

September 9, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First 2020 Human Case of West Nile Virus in DuPage County

DUPAGE COUNTY—The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) is reporting the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in DuPage County for 2020. A Darien resident in her 40s recently became ill and is recovering.

This is the first confirmed human case of WNV reported to date in Illinois in 2020.

WNV is transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes. Approximately one in five people who are infected with WNV will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than one percent will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

“We know people are spending more time outdoors to physically distance due to COVID-19, so please protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes and West Nile virus,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

The best way to prevent WNV is to avoid mosquito bites and follow the **Four Ds of Defense**:

- **Drain:** Drain those items that collect standing water around your home, yard or business. Scrub and refill pet water dishes and bird baths regularly.
- **Defend:** Use an insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors and reapply according to directions.
- **Dress:** Wear long pants, long sleeves and closed-toe shoes when outside to cover the skin.
- **Dusk to Dawn:** Wear repellent outdoors during these prime times for mosquito activity.

Residents should check the Personal Protection Index (PPI) on the DuPage County Health Department’s website for the current WNV activity. To view the PPI page, visit: <https://www.dupagehealth.org/243/Personal-Protection-Index>.

-More-

**STAY SAFE
DUPAGE**



Media Inquiries:

Don Bolger
Public Information Officer
☎ (630) 221-7374

DuPage County Board of Health

Sam Tornatore, J.D.
President
Lanny Wilson, M.D.
Vice President
Robert Spadoni, J.D.
Secretary
John Novak
Treasurer
Lori Bottoms
Melinda Finch
Nadeem N. Hussain, M.D.
Robert Larsen, J.D.
Uzma Muneer, M.D.
Lawrence J. Schouten, M.D.
Charlie A. Thurston
James P. Weeks, D.D.S.
Karen Ayala, M.P.H.
Executive Director

Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

The PPI ranges in risk level from zero-to-three, with zero being no activity and three announcing multiple human cases of WNV in DuPage County.

The current level is 2: “High numbers of infected mosquitoes in most areas, at least one confirmed human case.” The recommended actions:

- **Drain:** Drain those items that collect standing water around your home, yard or business. Scrub and refill pet water dishes and bird baths regularly.
- **Defend:** Use an insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors and reapply according to directions.
- **Dusk to Dawn:** Wear repellent outdoors during these prime times for mosquito activity.

The PPI is updated every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. throughout the WNV season by the Health Department’s vector-borne disease surveillance experts. Many community partners including townships, municipalities and park districts, also have the PPI widget posted to their homepages. WNV activity generally decreases in the fall.

The Health Department monitors WNV activity by collecting and testing mosquitoes in traps located throughout the county. WNV activity generally decreases in the fall when cooler temperatures arrive and especially after the first frost of the season.

More information on WNV is available at www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus.

###