

**Media Inquiries:**

(630) 221-7374  
media@dupagehealth.org

**DuPage County  
Board of Health**

Sam Tornatore, J.D.  
President

Lanny Wilson, M.D.  
Vice President

Robert Spadoni, J.D.  
Secretary/Treasurer

Lori Bottoms

Melinda Finch

Nadeem N. Hussain, M.D.

Robert Larsen, J.D.

Uzma Muneer, M.D.

Lawrence J. Schouten, M.D.

James P. Weeks, D.D.S.

Karen Ayala, M.P.H.  
Executive Director

September 25, 2020

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Health Department Reminds Residents to Fight the Bite

### *Multiple West Nile Virus Cases Reported in DuPage County*

**DUPAGE COUNTY**— The DuPage County Health Department announced on Friday that there are now four human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in DuPage County reported this year, since earlier this month, ranging in age from 40s to 70s. All four individuals have experienced severe symptoms and their conditions have been classified as neuroinvasive disease (e.g., meningitis, encephalitis).

“The COVID-19 pandemic is on the forefront of most people’s minds right now; however, we must remember to protect our health from other illnesses as well,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director. “As we spend more time outdoors, we need to protect ourselves from mosquito-borne illnesses by wearing insect repellent and draining standing water around our homes.”

The Health Department is reminding residents to “Fight the Bite” and protect themselves against mosquitoes by following the **4 Ds of Defense**.

- **Drain** standing water around your home and yard;
- **Defend** by using insect repellent containing **DEET** when outdoors;
- **Dress** with long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe shoes when outside;
- **Wear** repellent from **Dusk to Dawn**, when mosquitoes are most active.

The Health Department’s Personal Protection Index (PPI) remains at Level 3 (high risk) because of the number of mosquito batches testing positive for WNV. Level 3 indicates high numbers of infected mosquitoes in most areas and multiple human cases of WNV disease in DuPage County. View the PPI at <https://www.dupagehealth.org/243/Personal-Protection-Index>.

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.

-More-  
**STAY SAFE  
DUPAGE**



The PPI provides a real-time snapshot of WNV activity, which ranges from Level 0 (zero) meaning no risk to Level 3 announcing a high level of risk with multiple human cases of WNV. The PPI is updated every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. throughout the WNV season.

While most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms, approximately one in five people 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).

People over the age of 60 years, and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and organ transplants are at greater risk for serious illness and rarely may progress to coma and death.

Anyone who experiences symptoms should contact their health care provider for further evaluation and care.

The Health Department continues to monitor WNV activity by collecting and testing mosquitoes from traps located throughout the county from May through October, the West Nile virus season. To view DuPage County surveillance maps, visit <https://www.dupagehealth.org/245/Surveillance-Maps>.

For tips on how to gather more safely to prevent COVID-19 transmission, indoors and outdoors, visit <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/small-social-gatherings-safety-tips>.

###