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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.

September 6, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reminder: Fight the Bite, Mosquitoes are Still a Threat

DUPAGE COUNTY—This summer has been cooler and more humid than normal, but the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) reminds you to “Fight the Bite” and protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites and the risk of contracting West Nile virus (WNV).

The key factors in determining the degree of WNV activity are temperatures and rainfall. In hot, dry weather, mosquitoes that carry WNV (primarily *Culex* mosquitoes) breed in stagnant water, like street catch basins and ditches, and multiply rapidly.

DCHD’s countywide WNV surveillance program reports a recent increase in mosquito batches testing positive for the virus.

There have been three human cases of WNV reported to date in Illinois in 2019. No WNV cases have been reported in DuPage County so far this year, compared to 18 cases reported for all of 2018, including one death (5 percent).

The best way to prevent WNV is to “Fight the Bite” and follow the “4 Ds of Defense” to avoid mosquito bites:

- **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.

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).

-More-

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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.

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