

Media Inquiries:

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

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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.

May 24, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early Report of West Nile Activity in DuPage County Prompts Health Department Advisory

DUPAGE COUNTY—The report of a mosquito batch testing positive for the presence of West Nile virus (WNV) has prompted the DuPage County Health Department to encourage county residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites and the risk of contracting WNV. No human cases of WNV have been reported so far this year.

The Health Department recently launched its countywide WNV surveillance program and found a positive report from mosquitoes trapped in Wayne. This early report of WNV activity is the first report of WNV activity in Illinois as determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

This is especially important as residents prepare to be outdoors during the Memorial Day weekend.

“Be sure to Fight the Bite to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes and West Nile virus,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

The Health Department is again using the Personal Protection Index (PPI) widget on its website, which is an easy-to-understand alert system that informs the public about the risk of contracting WNV, as well as the steps that should be taken to protect yourself and your family, and help prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home, follow the “**4 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.

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Residents may also report dead birds using a simple form on the Health Department's website: <https://www.dupagehealth.org/tick-and-dead-bird-reporter>. Dead birds can often be an early sign of the presence of the virus in the environment.

The PPI widget provides residents with a real-time snapshot of WNV activity in the county, which ranges from zero to three, zero meaning there is no risk and three announcing a high level of risk with multiple confirmed human cases of WNV. The widget is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Residents will be able to see the PPI widget by visiting the Health Department's website.

Many community partners including townships, municipalities and park districts, also have the PPI widget posted to their homepages. Residents who click on the widget will be linked to the Health Department's "Fight the Bite" page for prevention tips.

The Health Department monitors WNV activity by collecting and testing mosquitoes in traps located throughout the county. The PPI widget will be updated by 3 p.m. each Wednesday throughout the WNV season. These weekly updates will be determined by the Health Department's vector-borne disease surveillance experts.

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