

**Media Inquiries:**

(630) 221-7374  
media@dupagehealth.org

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Executive Director

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **West Nile Virus Activity in DuPage County Prompts Health Advisory**

DUPAGE COUNTY—An increase in mosquito samples throughout the county testing positive for West Nile virus (WNV) has the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) reminding residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites and the risk of contracting WNV.

The key factors in determining the degree of West Nile Virus activity are temperatures and rainfall. In hot, dry weather, mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus (primarily *Culex* mosquitoes) breed in areas with stagnant water, such as street catch basins, ditches, birdbaths, flowerpots, and buckets, where the mosquitoes multiply rapidly.

“As people spend more time outdoors enjoying the end of summer, DCHD is reminding everyone to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes and West Nile virus,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

Protect yourself, protect your family, and prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home by following the “4 Ds of Defense”:

- **Drain:** Drain items that collect standing water around your home, yard, or business. Scrub and refill pet water dishes and birdbaths regularly (at least weekly).
- **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>.

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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.

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-PAGE 2-

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

The current level is 1: “Localized abundance of active mosquitoes, climate conditions favorable for development of virus.” The recommended actions are:

- Drain those items that collect standing water around your home, yard, or business. Scrub and refill pet water dishes and birdbaths regularly.
- Defend: Use an insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors and reapply according to directions.

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 when cooler temperatures arrive and especially after the first frost of the season. Additional information on WNV prevention is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/prevention/index.html> and <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus.html>.

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