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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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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Department Recommends "Fight the Bite" to protect against mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus

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

The number of mosquito samples testing positive for WNV rose to 56 percent for the week ending August 4, compared to 38 percent the previous week.

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 stagnant water, like street catch basins and ditches, and multiply rapidly.

“With the high number of mosquito samples testing positive for West Nile virus, it’s important to Fight the Bite,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

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 should check the Personal Protection Index (PPI) on the DuPage County Health Department's website for the current WNV activity.

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: Moderate Risk, defined as high numbers of infected mosquitoes in most areas, at least one human case. The recommended actions: Drain, Defend, Dusk to Dawn.

Many community partners including townships, municipalities and park districts, also have the PPI widget posted to their homepages.

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.

WNV activity generally decreases in the fall when cooler temperatures arrive and especially after the first frost of the season.

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