



Press Release

For immediate release: August 31, 2015

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First human case of West Nile virus in suburban Cook County

Residents urged to take basic prevention measures

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) officials have confirmed the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in suburban Cook County. The case was a man in his early 90s from the south suburbs. He became ill Aug. 22, was hospitalized Aug. 23, and died Aug. 27. WNV continues to circulate in mosquitoes throughout suburban Cook County. As of today, testing has indicated that there are pools of mosquitoes carrying WNV in 57 communities.

“Sadly, this case reminds us that West Nile virus can cause serious illness, and although rare, at times can lead to death,” said Cook County Department of Public Health COO Dr. Terry Mason. “It is important that we all keep our guard up this time of year and follow basic prevention tips.”

The most effective way to prevent becoming infected with WNV is to follow the 3 R’s:

- **Remove** standing water around your home in pet bowls, flower pots, old tires, baby pools and toys and remove leaves and debris from gutters so water doesn’t accumulate. Pools of water allowed to stagnate for three or four days become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- **Repel** mosquitoes when outdoors between dusk and dawn by applying insect repellent with DEET and wear light, loose fitting clothing.
- **Repair** or replace torn screens on doors and windows

Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. But illness can occur 3-15 days after an infected mosquito bite and cause symptoms of fever, headache and body aches. The disease can affect all ages, but people over the age of 50 and those with a chronic disease, such as heart disease or cancer, may be at increased risk for serious complications such as encephalitis or meningitis. For that reason, people who experience high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches, or a stiff neck should see a doctor immediately.

For continued updates about West Nile virus please visit www.cookcountypublichealth.org, follow us on Twitter: @Cookcohealth and like us on Facebook: facebook.com/CCDPH.

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