



Press Release

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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 woman in her 50s from the northwest suburbs, who became ill in late July. 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.

“West Nile virus can cause serious illness” 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** – Eliminate opportunities for mosquitoes to breed outside your home. Once a week, dump water that is collecting outside in buckets, flowerpots, toys, kiddie pools, pet bowls, spare tires, etc. Keep gutters clean and free of debris.
- **Repel** – Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents when outdoors. Always follow the directions on the label. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- **Repair** – Keep mosquitoes outside. Make sure your doors and windows have tightly fitting screens. Repair any tears or other openings. Use air conditioning when possible.

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.

To see where WNV is circulating in suburban Cook County, and learn more about it and other diseases carried by mosquitoes, visit fightthebitecookcounty.com. Information can also be found on Twitter (twitter.com/cookcohealth) and Facebook (facebook.com/CCDPH).

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