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Date: July 18, 2018

For Immediate Release

Positive West Nile Virus Mosquito Pool Confirmed in Winnebago County

WINNEBAGO COUNTY – The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) monitors for West Nile virus (WNV) activity in the community by setting out traps to capture pools of mosquitoes and sampling the mosquitoes for presence of the virus. As of July 18, 2018, WCHD has identified one mosquito pool positive for West Nile virus in the County and has sent one dead bird to the State for confirmation of suspected WNV.

To date, there have been no human cases of WNV in Winnebago County this year. However, the identification of a positive mosquito pool is associated with an increased risk of WNV in people. In addition, the recent hot, dry weather is also an ideal environment for the mosquitoes that spread WNV.

WNV is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito which picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms in humans include fever, nausea, headache, and muscle aches. There are no vaccines to prevent WNV or medications to treat it. Not all mosquitoes or birds carry WNV and most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness. However, WNV can cause severe illness in some people, including meningitis, encephalitis, or even death. People over 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness.

“Take steps to protect you and your family from West Nile virus by preventing mosquito bites,” said Ryan Kerch, Supervisor of the Vector Control Surveillance Program in the Center for Environmental Health Improvement of WCHD. “Use insect repellent and wear protective clothing. Remove standing water in yards and neighborhoods to reduce the mosquito population.”

Protect Your Family from West Nile Virus

The Winnebago County Health Department encourages you to take the following steps to help protect you and your family from West Nile virus and other vector-borne diseases.

- Reduce standing water, breeding sites, and access to your home by:
 - Dumping standing water every five days
 - Getting rid of old tires and debris
 - Making sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens without tears or openings.
- Repel mosquitoes by:
 - Wearing shoes and socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors.
 - Using EPA-registered insect repellent containing 25-30% DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR 3535, according to label instructions.
- Report any dead birds to WCHD at 815-720-4245.

For more information, visit the Winnebago County Health Department website at www.wchd.org. Like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), or, contact us at 815-720-4000.

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