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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Winnebago County Health Department Reports First Mosquito Pool Positive
with West Nile Virus in Winnebago County for 2016**

The first mosquito pool in Winnebago County 61115 Zip Code (Machesney Park) has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). WNV has been present in Winnebago County for the past 15 years.

The recent hot and dry weather conditions has increased the rate of Culex mosquito production, mosquito flight activity and virus replication, thereby increasing the proportion of birds and mosquitoes infected with WNV and the risk of disease to humans. Humans contract WNV through the bite of an infected mosquito. The peak period for WNV transmission, particularly to humans, has been from mid-July through October.

“We are not surprised on this recent finding, and continue to remind residents that as they head outside this summer and fall, it’s important to take precautions to protect themselves and their family from being bitten by an infected mosquito,” states Ryan Kerch, Environmental Health Supervisor for the Winnebago County Health Department.

Winnebago County Health Department recommends practicing the three “R’s to reduce the risk of human cases of WNV:

- **REDUCE** exposure - avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
 - Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
 - Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.
- **REPEL** - When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – Report dead birds through the hotline at 815.720.4245 or the website at www.wchd.org.

For more information on West Nile virus visit the following websites:

Illinois Department of Public Health at www.idph.state.il.us

Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>

For more information on the Winnebago County Health Department go online at www.wchd.org. Like us: [facebook.com/Winnebago County Health Department](https://www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCountyHealthDepartment). Follow us: twitter.com/WinnCohealth.

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