



Genesee County Health Department

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RE: West Nile Virus Activity in Michigan

Mosquitoes in Michigan can carry illnesses such as West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The Genesee County Health Department would like to remind residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent and to remove mosquito breeding sites around the home. Culex mosquitoes that transmit West Nile Virus breed in outdoor items around the home that collect standing water. Residents are encouraged to take the following steps to avoid WNV and other diseases carried by mosquitoes:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other EPA approved repellent to exposed skin or clothing, especially during peak mosquito activity periods such as dusk and dawn.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes out of buildings.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes lay eggs.
- Wear light colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.

Most people bitten by a WNV-infected mosquito show no symptoms of illness. However, some become sick three to 15 days after exposure. WNV can cause serious neurological illnesses, such as meningitis and encephalitis and can have long-term health consequences. People 50 and older as well as people with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to severe WNV disease symptoms.

The Michigan West Nile Virus website (www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus) includes up to date surveillance information, and the ability for citizens to report sick or dead birds. Additional information can also be found at www.cdc.gov/westnile.

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