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First Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported in Winnebago County This Year

Prevention is Key - Continue to Fight the Bite into the Fall

Oshkosh, WI (September 26, 2024) - Local health officials are advising residents to continue to protect themselves against mosquito bites as they announce this year's first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a resident of Winnebago County. Several other people with WNV illness have been reported in Wisconsin this year.

West Nile Virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito and is not spread from person to person. Mosquitoes get the virus by feeding on infected birds.

WNV illness is most common in Wisconsin during the months of August and September. However, the risk of contracting WNV is present anytime mosquitoes are active, so it is important for people to be vigilant about preventing mosquito bites throughout the rest of the summer and into early fall.

Most people (80%) who are infected with WNV do not get sick. Those who do become ill usually experience mild symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle ache, rash, and fatigue. However, some people (less than 1%) who become infected with the virus get seriously ill with symptoms that include high fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, confusion, paralysis, and coma. Older adults and those with compromised immune systems are at greater risk of developing severe illness that can be fatal. It is important that people contact a health care provider if they suspect they have WNV illness.

The best way to avoid illnesses spread by mosquitoes is to reduce exposure to mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. To help prevent mosquito bites, wear long sleeve shirts and pants, and use an EPA-registered repellent. Mosquitoes are generally not active when temperatures are below 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Mosquitoes will no longer be active this season once there is a hard frost (temperatures below 28 degrees for at least four consecutive hours), but until then, people are urged to protect themselves.

For more information, contact Winnebago County Public Health at 920-232-3000 or visit winnebagocountywi.gov/health.

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Additional Resources From Wisconsin Department of Health Services:

[Illnesses Spread by Mosquitoes in Wisconsin](#)

[West Nile Virus Data](#)

[Mosquito Bite Prevention](#)