

First Case Of West Nile Virus Confirmed In New Jersey

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For Release:
August 16, 2013

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First Case Of West Nile Virus Confirmed In New Jersey ([En Español](#))

The Department of Health announced today the state's first case of West Nile Virus and reminds residents to take steps to protect themselves against mosquito bites and to help limit the mosquito population by removing standing water from their properties.

A 55-year old male from Burlington County developed symptoms of the disease on August 5, including fever, muscle weakness, vomiting and dizziness. He was hospitalized and now is at home recovering. He was exposed while gardening and conducting other outdoor activities around his home.

West Nile Virus has been identified among mosquitos in all New Jersey counties except Cumberland and Salem.

"Most human cases of West Nile virus typically appear from August through October, and residents should be careful to protect themselves by using insect repellent and staying inside during dawn and dusk when mosquitos are most active," said New Jersey Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd.

Additional protection measures include:

- Maintaining screen doors and windows
- Using insect netting on infant carriers and strollers
- Wearing long sleeves and pants whenever possible

2012 was the most active West Nile Virus season in the state's history with 48 cases and six fatalities. Three of the 48 cases from last year were reported from Burlington County, including one fatality. In 2011, there were seven cases and no fatalities. In 2010, there were 30 cases and two fatalities.

"Superstorm Sandy has created many new places for mosquitos to breed, including depressions left by fallen trees and the Department is asking residents to take steps to help limit the mosquito population on their properties by removing standing water where mosquitos

may breed." noted O'Dowd.

Tips to limit standing water include:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property
- Pay special attention to discarded tires that may have accumulated. The used tire has become the most important domestic mosquito producer in this country
- Drill holes in the bottom and elevate recycling containers that are left outdoors
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains. Roof gutters are easily overlooked but can produce millions of mosquitoes each season
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use. A wading pool becomes a mosquito producer if it is not used on a regular basis
- Turn over wheelbarrows and do not allow water to stagnate in bird baths
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. A swimming pool that is left untended can produce enough mosquitoes to result in neighborhood-wide complaints. Be aware mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on pool covers

Many people infected with West Nile Virus do not become ill and may not develop symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they may be mild or severe and show up three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Mild symptoms include flu-like illness with fever, headache, body aches, nausea and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Severe symptoms include high fever, neck stiffness and swelling of the brain (encephalitis or meningitis) which can lead to coma, convulsions and death.

If a person thinks they may have WNV infection, they should visit their health care provider for further evaluation and potential testing for WNV. There is no treatment for WNV, and mild to moderate infections usually resolve within 7 to 10 days. More severe infections may require hospitalization and supportive treatment.

Earlier this year the Department launched a public awareness campaign alerting people to the dangers of West Nile Virus. The public service announcement and other WNV information is available on the Department's Sandy recovery website at:

http://www.state.nj.us/health/er/hurricane_recovery_resources.shtml

For more information on West Nile Virus, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile> or <http://www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito>.

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