



Boone County
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

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The mission of the BCDPH is to protect and promote health in Boone County.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Belvidere, IL 61008

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Health Department Reports First West Nile Virus Positive Bird in Boone County

The Boone County Health Department announces that a blue jay collected on September 4th in the 61008 zip code, has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). To date, Boone County has no human cases of WNV.

West Nile virus is transmitted from birds to humans through bites of the house mosquito. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. However, in rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 and immuno-compromised individuals are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

"The Health Department is operating four mosquito monitoring sites and reviewing data from throughout the county to identify "hot spots" for the mosquito that carries West Nile virus," said Amanda Mehl, Administrator of the Boone County Health Department. "Even though we have no positive mosquito batches, we are not surprised to have a positive bird, and this confirmation serves as a good reminder that West Nile is, and continues to be, in the area," Mehl said.

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The Health Department is urging residents to prevent mosquito breeding and to prevent mosquito bites. Recommendations to prevent mosquito breeding include:

- Discard old tires, buckets, barrels or any water holding containers. Poke drain holes in tires used as bumpers at docks.
- Keep roof gutters and downspouts clear of debris.
- Keep trash containers covered.
- Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
- Drain unused swimming pools.
- Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water.
- Change the water in bird baths and plant urns at least once a week.
- Store boats upside down or drain rainwater weekly.

Boone County Health Department also recommends practicing the three “Rs” – reduce, repel and report.

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 weather permits, wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent on the skin under your clothing. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

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- Take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing from dusk to dawn or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.

REPORT

- The Health Department is monitoring freshly-dead birds, such as crows or blue jays. The birds must not show any signs of decay or trauma. To report a dead bird, call 815-544-2951. Be prepared to give the location, date and time you found the dead bird. You may also contact the Health Department to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The Department is relying on county residents to help identify and report potential mosquito breeding areas in and around underdeveloped or abandoned residential building sites and swimming pools.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the Illinois Department of Public Health website at:

<http://www.idph.state.il.us/>.

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