June 26, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN BOONE COUNTY MOSQUITOES

BOONE COUNTY—Routine mosquito testing has identified the first mosquitoes positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in Boone County in 2020. The mosquitoes were collected in the Poplar Grove zip code. Boone County is the 4th county in Illinois to report positive mosquitoes but has no positive birds or human cases of WNV. To date no human cases have been reported in Illinois.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Four out of five people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will not experience any illness. Those who do get sick commonly experience fever, nausea, headache and body aches within 3 to 14 days of the bite. However, serious illness such as encephalitis and meningitis, with lingering complications and even death, are possible.

“The best way to prevent West Nile encephalitis and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites,” said Amanda Mehl, Public Health Administrator of the Boone County Health Department.
REDUCE exposure – avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Keep doors and windows closed. Eliminate sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including wading pools, old tires, and other receptacles. Change bird bath water weekly.

REPEL - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Apply EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions.

REPORT - The Boone County Health Department (BCHD) 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 BCHD 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.

To learn more about West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases and about prevention methods, read the other materials available on the IDPH West Nile virus Web site or contact the Illinois Department of Public Health West Nile virus information hotline at 866-369-9710, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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About The Boone County Health Department
The Boone County Health Department is a local health department committed to serving the health needs of its almost 54,000 residents. Established in 1966, we promote and protect the health of the people and the communities in Boone County, right here, where they live, work, learn and play.