

# NEWS RELEASE

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East Side Health District · Madison County Health Department · St. Clair County Health Department

## For Immediate Release

**Date:** August 14, 2015  
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## **Metro East Health Departments Confirm Additional Mosquitoes Positive for WNV – Encourage Citizens to follow the 3 R's: Reduce, Repel, Report**

**Wood River, IL** – Today, Madison County Health Department, St. Clair County Health Department and East Side Health District announced that mosquitoes testing positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) have been on the rise over the past week. Positive mosquito samples have been collected in Belleville, Collinsville, East St. Louis, Edwardsville, Fairview Heights, Freeburg, Hamel Township, Marine Township, Maryville, O'Fallon, Shiloh, Stookey Township, and Troy. On May 26, 2015, St. Clair County Health Department received its first mosquito pool that was positive for West Nile Virus in O'Fallon, IL. On July 20, 2015, East Side Health District received its first mosquito pool that was positive for West Nile Virus in East St. Louis, IL. On July 21, 2015, Madison County Health Department received its first mosquito pool that was positive for West Nile Virus in Edwardsville, IL. No dead birds submitted for laboratory testing from any of these three health jurisdictions have been positive for WNV yet this season. To date, no human cases have been reported in Illinois in 2015.

West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Investigations by health officials have found that wild birds, especially crows and blue jays, are key indicator species of West Nile Virus in an area. Positive birds and/or positive mosquitoes have been found in 44 Illinois counties this season. "Our health departments monitor activity and conduct surveillance every year mid-April through mid-October," stated Myla Blandford, Assistant Administrator at East Side Health District. Due to recent increased WNV activity in mosquitoes in the Metro East

area, health officials recommend citizens be pro-active in using insect repellent to ward off mosquitoes and wear protective clothing during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

The County Surveillance Program followed by local health departments in Illinois is an important tool that is used to gauge appropriate responses to address the potential for human cases of WNV. "It is important that everyone knows what to do to help with the prevention and detection of West Nile Virus," stated Jennifer Meyer, director of Environmental Program at St. Clair County Health Department.

There are specific criteria required to test a dead bird for WNV. Birds should be dead within 24-48 hours and not decomposed (strong odor present, dried/deflated eyes, maggots present or bloated with decomposition gases). Birds should have no obvious cause of death. Eligible birds will be submitted to the laboratory by health department staff.

**Dead birds will be accepted for testing through October 15, 2015. For more information about dead bird collection in your area, contact your location health department at:**

East Side Health District: (618) 271-8722, ext 100

Madison County Health Department : (618) 296-6079

St. Clair County Health Department: (618) 233-7769

The best way to prevent West Nile Virus or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – 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 flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles. Change water in bird baths weekly.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** - In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

“We need your help to reduce the number of mosquitoes, reduce opportunities for mosquitoes, and prevent bites. We encourage our citizens to follow these three simple steps of Reduce, Repel, and Report,” said Mary Cooper, Environmental Health Manager at Madison County Health Department.

Additional information about West Nile Virus can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health’s Web site at [www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance) or <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvgenpublic.htm>.

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**PRESS NOTE: For media calls on this Press Release, please contact:**

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