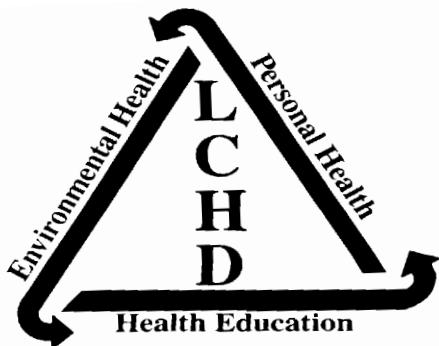


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: December 30, 2022
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"January is Cervical Cancer Month"

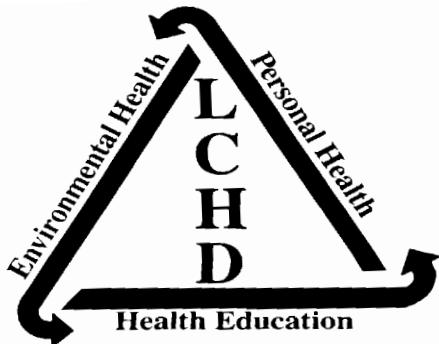
OTTAWA, IL—In recognition of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month the LaSalle County Health Department is urging residents to "Sock it to Cancer" on January 17th. Sock it to Cancer is a day where people can wear and show off their teal socks to support Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. We encourage women over the age of 21 to be screened for cervical cancer. The goal is to eradicate cervical cancer in Illinois by women taking charge and getting screened. During 2022 an estimated 14,100 women in the United States were diagnosed with cervical cancer, according to the State of Illinois. Cervical cancer, when caught early, is nearly 100 percent curable.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) reports that between 60 and 80 percent of American women with newly diagnosed invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap Smear in the last five years and /or may have never had one. Cervical Cancer is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide and one of the most preventable and treatable when detected early. In addition to increasing awareness of cervical cancer there are some preventative steps that women can take. Studies have shown, regular exercise, a healthy diet, routine screenings and getting the cervical cancer vaccine to help prevent Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), decreases the risk for cervical cancer. Licensed HPV vaccines for females and males are available. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 11 or 12 year old girls and boys begin the HPV vaccine series. (Vaccination can be started at age 9.) The vaccination series must be completed by age 45. HPV vaccination is offered at LaSalle County Health Department by appointment and those who are interested in vaccination or want more information can call the Health Department.

The LaSalle County Health Department has a Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) available which can pay for Pap Smear tests for LaSalle or Grundy County women, ages 21-64 who have no insurance or who have high deductibles regardless of income. We invite and encourage anyone who needs more information on cervical cancer and the importance of Pap Smear tests, the IBCCP program, or the cervical cancer vaccines to contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov



MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 6, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"January is National Radon Action Month"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department is encouraging residents to test the radon level in their home. Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in most soil. As radon travels through the soil, it can easily move through small spaces in a foundation and enter a building, where it becomes trapped and accumulates in the air.

Radon has no taste, smell, or color. Testing is the only way to find out if there is a dangerous level of radon in your home. The best time to test for radon is during cold weather when windows and doors are closed.

Most radon exposures occur in the home. When people breathe in radon, it damages the lungs, which can cause lung cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Radon can be found throughout Illinois and levels can vary from one home to another, even in the same neighborhood. It's estimated more than 1,100 people in Illinois develop radon-related lung cancer each year according to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established the radon action level at 4 picocuries per liter of air (4 pCi/L). At or above this level, it is recommended that corrective measures be taken to reduce indoor radon levels. Radon mitigation is the only effective way to reduce levels and decrease the risk of lung cancer. The most common radon reduction system involves the installation of a vent pipe and fan, which draws air from underneath a building and displaces it outside. The cost of a system varies depending on the reduction method chosen and building size. Radon is a preventable health threat through testing and mitigation.

According to the IEMA, approximately one in two homes tested in Illinois (45 percent of homes) have radon at or above the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L. In addition, the average Illinois indoor air radon concentration is 5.1 pCi/L. "Testing for radon is simple and inexpensive, and it's the only way to know if your family is at risk. Testing takes 3-7 days. Tests should be done on the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. Tests should not be done in kitchens, bathrooms,

laundry rooms, or utility rooms. A short-term test is very easy to use and is best completed during the winter months, when windows and doors are generally closed," said Jennie Osborn, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department.

In 2022, LaSalle County Health Department gave out 227 test kits. One hundred thirty-eight (138) of those test kits have been submitted for analysis, for a 60% usage rate. One hundred fifteen (115) have produced valid results, with fifty-three (53) having a result above 4.0pCi/L. The average result of the kits analyzed in 2022 is 10.2 pCi/L.

LaSalle County Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up. Call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366, for more information on radon test kits.

Additional Resources:

Visit <https://www.radon.com/instructions/> to view a testing kit instructional video.

For additional information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: February 1, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (#74314) or Jenny Barrie (#74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, IL – National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 3, 2023. Together, we can wear red to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and help save lives. Why? Because losing even one woman to cardiovascular disease is too many.

February is American Heart Month, a month to spread awareness about the importance of heart health. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in Illinois, and the U.S. While heart disease has traditionally been seen as a “man’s disease” one in three women dies of heart disease each year. Women are also more likely than men to exhibit signs of heart attack such as shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting or back and jaw pain. Heart attacks are life and death emergencies where every second counts so we encourage people to know their risks. Factors that may increase your chances of getting heart disease include:

- High Blood Cholesterol
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- Being Overweight
- Family history of early heart disease
- Age (55 or older for women)
- Being physically inactive
- Smoking

Some steps you can take to decrease your risks of heart disease is to know your numbers when it comes to cholesterol and blood pressure. In addition, controlling your weight, being physically active and decreasing your stress level can also have added benefits.

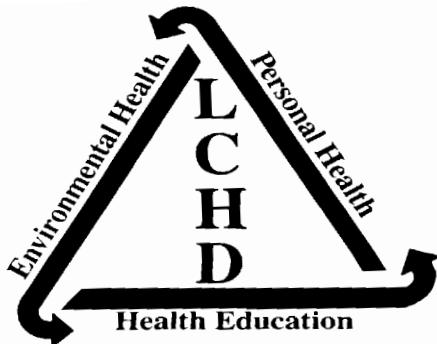
If you experience any of the following symptoms, do not wait before calling for help. Call 911 or get to the hospital right away if you experience any of the following.

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Sudden dizziness or lightheadedness
- Unusual upper body pain (arms, back, jaw)
- Skipped heartbeats
- Unusual or unexplained fatigue

For more information about heart disease, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: March 16, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Phone: (815) 433-3366
Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex 74315)

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, IL -- The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that World TB Day is Friday, March 24th. This is the 141st anniversary of Robert Koch's discovery of the TB bacillus. When Koch announced his discovery on March 24, 1882 in Berlin, Germany, tuberculosis was responsible for the death of one of every seven people living in Europe and the United States.

World TB Day 2023's theme is, "Yes! We can end TB!". We must continue to "Think, Test, and Treat TB." TB is still a life-threatening problem, and it impacts people across the United States. TB knows no borders, and people in the United States are suffering from TB. The theme's design is to build public awareness that tuberculosis today remains an epidemic in much of the World causing the deaths of several million people each year. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have led to increased mortality from TB, decreased the number of people diagnosed and treated for TB, and dangerously affected the rights of people with TB. The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. TB of the lungs causes the general symptoms plus coughing, sometimes producing blood, and chest pain.

TB is caused by an organism called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. When a person with active TB disease coughs or sneezes, tiny particles containing *M. tuberculosis* may be expelled into the air. If another person inhales air that contains these particles, transmission from one person to another may occur. However, not everyone infected with the TB germ becomes sick; as a result, two TB related conditions exist; latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease -- both of which are treatable and curable. There are an estimated 13 million persons in the United States with latent TB infection, and about 10% of these infected individuals will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. TB is not a disease of the past, TB can infect anyone.

Today, one-third of the World's population is infected with TB and about 2 million people die of this disease each year, even though it is curable. To find out more about TB, or to see about getting tested for a possible TB exposure, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountylil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: March 30, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"LaSalle County Health Department Recognizes National Public Health Week"

OTTAWA, IL - During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association (APHA) brings together communities across the US to observe National Public Health Week. National Public Health Week, with the theme "Centering and Celebrating Cultures in Health," will be observed April 3-9, 2023. Making communities safe and healthy is public health's top priority. Public Health serves as an invisible shield of protection to promote and protect the health of people in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play for generations to come.

As a reminder, here are a few of the programs and services the Health Department offers on a regular basis. Citizens are encouraged to call and speak with a staff member for additional information and questions.

- [Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program \(IBCCP\)](#) – Do you qualify for a free mammogram and pap smear? Our IBCCP nurse is available to answer eligibility questions and enroll qualified women.
- [Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#) - The mission of the LaSalle County WIC program is to improve the health status of women, infants, and children; to reduce the incidence of infant mortality, premature births and low birth weights; and to aid in the development of children. This program serves income eligible pregnant, post-partum, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five years. The WIC program provides health screening, nutrition education and counseling, and supplemental foods including formula for infants.
- [Free HIV tests and Hepatitis C Screening \(finger stick test\)](#) – If you feel you should be tested or have questions regarding your risk factors, our communicable disease nurse is available to answer questions in a confidential setting.
- [Low-cost childhood and adult immunizations](#) - Please call the Health Department to schedule an appointment.
- [COVID-19 Vaccinations](#) – Individuals who need to start the COVID-19 vaccination series or receive a booster, should call the Health Department to schedule an appointment.

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- Free Radon Test Kits – The Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up.

The LaSalle County Health Department will also utilize social media to help increase awareness of public health issues and National Public Health Week. The Health Department's Facebook page will be updated daily with posts that offer tips on a variety of public health issues and also highlight some of the programs available at the Health Department. For additional information on programs and services offered, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 1, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month"

OTTAWA – In observance of Lyme Disease Awareness month and the warmer weather our area has been experiencing, it's important to take precautions against tick bites and the illnesses they can carry. Illnesses like Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease, Tularemia, and Ehrlichiosis can cause mild symptoms or severe infections. In LaSalle County, Lyme disease is the tick-related illness seen most commonly. There were 4 cases of Lyme disease confirmed in the county in 2022.

YEAR	NUMBER OF HUMAN CASES
2017	2
2018	4
2019	8
2020	5
2021	2
2022	4

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. The risk of exposure to ticks is greatest in the woods and in the edge area between lawns and woods; however, ticks can also be carried by animals onto lawns and gardens and into houses by pets. Campers, hikers, outdoor workers, and others may be exposed to infected ticks in wooded, brushy, and grassy places. People who spend time in heavily wooded areas where infected ticks are common are at higher risk for exposure.

"Remember to apply an EPA-registered insect repellent when spending time outdoors. Most tick-borne diseases require the tick to be attached and feeding for several hours before the person gets infected. Tick bites are often painless at first and most people do not know they have been bitten so checking yourself for ticks immediately after being in a high-risk area is important. Wear closed-toed shoes and light-colored clothing so you can see ticks on your clothing. Talk to your doctor if you have been bitten by a tick and experience fever, chills, muscle and joint aches, or a rash," says Jennifer Osborn, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department.

-More-

Simple tips to avoid tick exposure include:

- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to label directions.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and sleeping tents. Or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Conduct full-body tick checks on family members (underarms, ears, belly button, behind knees, between legs, waist, hair and scalp) every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes) to kill ticks.
- Bathe or shower within two hours after coming indoors.
- If you find a tick on yourself, it is often helpful to keep the tick for species identification. Place the tick in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed bag/container to bring to your healthcare provider or local health department for submission to IDPH. A submission form can be found on the [IDPH website](#).

If you find a tick attached to your skin, there's no need to panic. Remove the tick as soon as possible to reduce your chances of getting an infection from the tick bite. The CDC recommends the following steps to remove a tick:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Avoid twisting or jerking. If the mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.
Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.
3. Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

If you become ill with a fever and/or rash after being in an area where ticks may be, please contact your health care provider. The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses can include fever, chills, aches, pains, and rash (not in all cases). Early recognition and treatment of the infection decreases the risk of serious complications.

For additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit their website at www.lasallecountyil.gov. Also, please visit the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) interactive tick surveillance map created by their Vector Control staff. The map shows what ticks have been identified in Illinois by county, in addition to the diseases they were tested for and number of positive results.

<https://idph.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=976061db733441eb977ef5cf2facd5c4>

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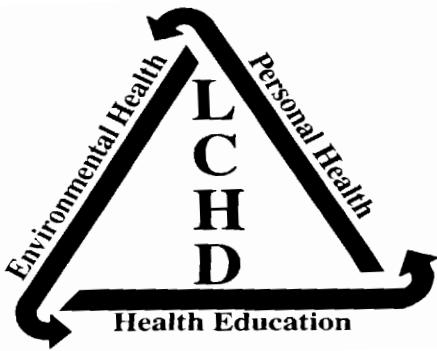


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www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 9, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"LaSalle County Health Department Marks the End of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Declaration"

Ottawa, IL - On May 11, 2023, the State of Illinois and the nation will reach a major milestone as the Public Health Emergency (PHE) declarations that have been in place since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic will end. In honor of the public health and health care heroes who sacrificed to protect the public during the last three years, Governor JB Pritzker has declared May 11 as "Illinois Public Health & Health Care Hero Day."

The LaSalle County Health Department would like to thank our county residents for their support during this time. When COVID-19 virus was first identified in early 2020, it was a new virus - the world had no natural immunity, or vaccine to help us fight the virus. Globally, many restrictions that hadn't been utilized since the 1918 flu pandemic were implemented – global travel restrictions, stay at home orders, social distancing and masking mandates became part of our new normal. The restrictions were at first, an attempt to stop the virus in its tracks, but later became more about protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities from severe infection.

Since the beginning of the pandemic the LaSalle County Health Department has aimed to provide our residents with the most up-to-date Covid-19 information as well as the local data regarding local disease transmission. This data helped our businesses, schools, hospitals, long term care facilities and our residents to make informed decisions about protecting our community and themselves from infection and most importantly from severe infection. In addition, our local communities and our community partners, worked together to help ensure protection for our vulnerable populations while trying to maintain a sense of normalcy in these unprecedented times.

As we know, the national and state emergency and public health emergency declarations for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic will end on May 11, 2023. But, Covid-19 has not disappeared, rather it has become part of our daily lives. It is still here and will likely continue to be a threat to our vulnerable populations for several years. But we know so much more about the virus and have made so much progress in our fight against severe infection. We have the tools available to fight severe infection and protect our loved ones and members of our community. Those tools include: washing your hands, staying up-to-date on your vaccination status, using at-

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home tests if you have been exposed or have symptoms, staying home if you are sick, and wearing a mask if you have been exposed.

With the national and state Public Health Emergencies for COVID-19 expiring on May 11, there will be changes to data collection and reporting on the virus. After May 11, the CDC has announced it will stop tracking and reporting COVID-19 cases at the community level, meaning that it will no longer be providing a weekly update that show whether COVID-19 cases are at Low, Medium or High Level. Therefore, the Health Department will no longer include this information on their website. Please remember that our web page, <https://www.lasallecountyil.gov/721/COVID-19-Resources-and-Updates>, will continue to provide the most up-to-date information related to COVID-19. Our webpage also contains valuable links to assist residents to monitor symptoms, access testing locations, determine isolation & exposure calculations, and locate COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. Lastly, it provides links to COVID-19 data from the CDC and IDPH.

When the public health emergency ends, COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be free for all, as long as the supply of federally purchased vaccines lasts. However, access to and cost of testing and treatment will vary on whether they have public, private, or no health insurance.

Vaccines

- Vaccines will remain free for everyone when the public health emergency ends. As long as the supply of federally purchased vaccines lasts, COVID-19 vaccines will remain free.

Testing and Treatment

- Coverage for COVID-19 testing and treatment will vary by insurance type.
- For people with Medicaid coverage, COVID-19 testing and treatment will remain covered at no cost through September 2024.
- For those without insurance, COVID-19 testing and treatment will no longer be covered, and the cost will be determined by individual providers. However, free tests and treatment may be available at local free clinics or community health centers.

The end of the PHE means that the federal government is expected to phase out providing tests, vaccines and treatment directly to states – however these efforts will not end immediately, but over the coming months. The state of Illinois is continuing to offer at-home rapid tests to households in economically disadvantaged communities through June 30, through a partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation's Project ACT - <https://www.accesscovidtests.org/en>. When existing stockpiles of tests, vaccines and treatments run out, coverage will shift to private insurers.

In conclusion, LaSalle County Health Department continues to monitor newly-reported COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths just as we do for other reportable diseases. Monitoring COVID-19 and keeping the public informed is very important to us. If things change or we feel that, based on current conditions, a return to more detailed COVID reports is necessary, we will adjust accordingly. For additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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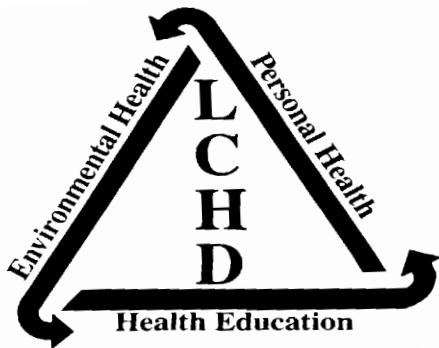


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www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 16, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Health Department Begins Dead Bird Surveillance"

Ottawa, IL—The LaSalle County Health Department has begun collecting dead crows, blue jays, and robins and will continue this process until October 15, 2023. Dead birds are important sentinels for early detection of West Nile virus activity. West Nile virus generally appears in birds and mosquitoes before it is transmitted to humans. Over the past twenty years, West Nile virus activity has been documented throughout LaSalle County. If you find a dead bird, please contact the Health Department's Environmental Health Division at 815-433-3366. Below are the criteria the Health Department uses to determine if a bird is eligible to submit for testing:

1. The bird is dead and the carcass is in good condition. Birds should be dead for less than 48 hours prior to collection, and have not started decomposing (no strong odor, no bloating, no maggots, eyes are not deflated or dried).
2. The bird has no obvious cause of death. Birds with obvious injuries such as wounds or missing parts should not be submitted for testing. Crushed carcasses and birds found along roadways are not acceptable.
3. The bird must be one that is acceptable for testing. At this time the Health Department is **only** collecting **crows, blue jays, and robins**. To help identify the type of bird, please visit <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/dead-bird-collection> for bird identification information.

As in past years, Health Department staff are getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes for West Nile virus. The mosquito collection and testing equipment was purchased with grant money. The Health Department also utilized the grant money to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide, which is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites. The larvicide will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

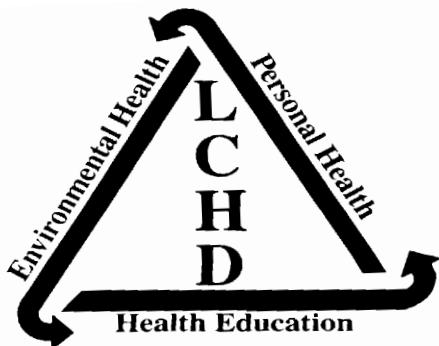
***Please Note:**

The LaSalle County Health Department does not collect and test birds for Avian Flu. **To report sick or dead domestic/owner poultry to: The Illinois Department of Agriculture at 217-782-4944 or USDA APHIS Veterinary Services at 1-866-536-7593 To report sick or dead wild birds (5 or more) to: your local IDNR District Wildlife Biologist or USDA Wildlife Services at 1-866-487-3297.**

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: June 9, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 4314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 4315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Marseilles tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on June 2nd and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. This is the first documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year.

According to Jennifer Osborn, Director of Environmental Health, "This is the time of year we expect to see West Nile virus activity increase. Mosquitoes will remain active until the first hard frost, so it is important that everyone take precautions to protect themselves from mosquitoes and the viruses they carry. In hot, dry weather, mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus breed in stagnant water and multiply rapidly. The best way to protect yourself against illness is to wear insect repellent, especially during the evening hours, and to get rid of any stagnant water around your home to reduce the number of mosquitoes."

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, which has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered 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** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/top>.

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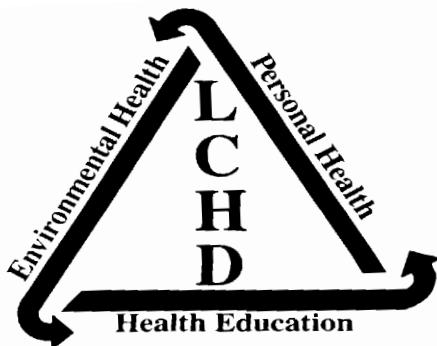


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www.lasallecounty.org

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: June 20, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 4314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 4315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS, contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366. Ottawa, IL – June 27 is National HIV Testing Day, an annual occasion to encourage people to get an HIV test. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. People at higher risk should get tested more often. The goal of the campaign is to identify people who don't know they are HIV positive so they can access treatment. LaSalle County Health Department offers free rapid HIV finger stick tests and encourage interested individuals to come on June 27th between 9:00 am – 3:00pm. Appointments are strongly recommended to ensure adequate staffing. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), currently almost 40 percent of people with HIV are not diagnosed until they already have developed AIDS. That can be up to 10 years after they have become infected with HIV. In the United States, nearly 1.1 million people are living with HIV, and approximately 160,000 don't know they are infected.

While we have made tremendous strides in treating HIV disease and related infections, those advances mean little to someone who doesn't know they are infected. If you have ever had unprotected sex with someone who uses injectable drugs, if you have ever shared needles, if you are a man who has ever had sex with another man, or if you have other factors that put you at risk for HIV infection, you should consider getting an HIV test. Today more tools than ever are available to prevent HIV. In addition to limiting your number of sexual partners, never sharing needles and using condoms correctly and consistently, you can reduce your risk.

To learn more information about HIV, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366. You can also access our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov, or like us on Facebook/Twitter.



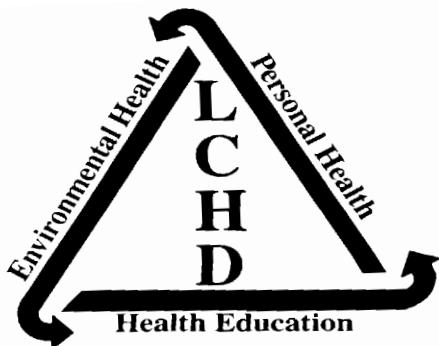
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www.lasallecounty.org

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: June 28, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

" Additional Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from LaSalle tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on June 27th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. This is the second documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year. Additionally on June 9th, mosquitoes that were collected in Marseilles tested positive for the virus.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce

mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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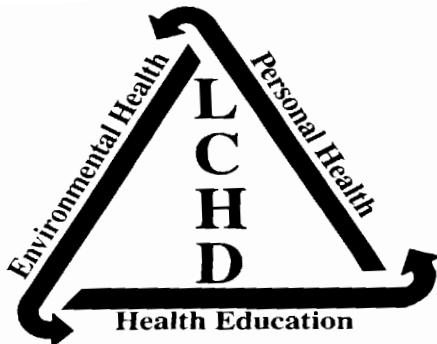


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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 13, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

" Additional Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Utica tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on July 12th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES (2 batches)
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.

- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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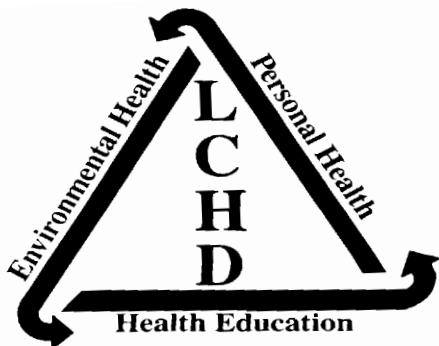


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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 21, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

" Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus in Ottawa"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Ottawa tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on July 21st and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES (2 batches)
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.

- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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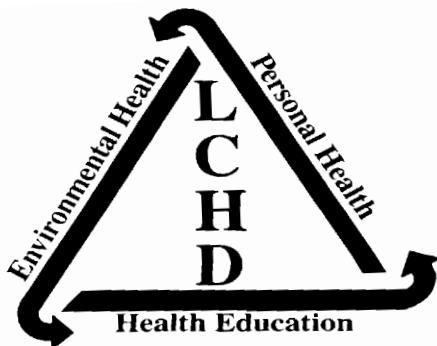


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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 25, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Bird Tests Positive for West Nile Virus"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that a crow from LaSalle tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird was collected and tested on July 25, 2023. Environmental Health staff was able to conduct the confirmatory test on the bird at the Health Department. To date, the following West Nile virus activity has been reported in LaSalle County in 2023.

Municipality	Date Collected	Animal/Insect
Marseilles	06-02-2023	Mosquitoes
LaSalle	06-27-2023	Mosquitoes (2 batches)
Utica	07-12-2023	Mosquitoes
Ottawa	07-21-2023	Mosquitoes
LaSalle	07-25-2023	Crow

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex pipiens* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, which has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus. Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, bluejays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- REDUCE - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- REPEL - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered 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 – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecounty.org. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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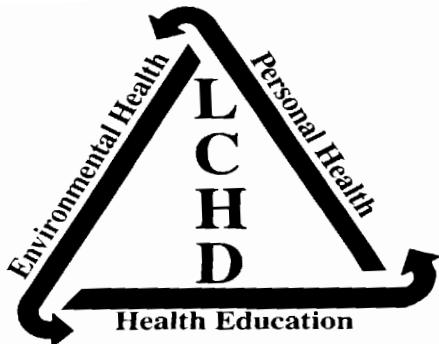
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www.lasallecounty.org

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 31, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext.74314)
Leslie Dougherty (ext.74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Illinois Breastfeeding Month”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL— The State of Illinois recognizes August as Breastfeeding Promotion Month and nationally, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated August 1st thru August 7th. The 2023 theme is “Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for Working Parents,” bringing focus to breastfeeding and working parents and how individuals and organizations can protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the work environment. LaSalle County Health Department along with medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists support and encourage all new mothers to embrace breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding for the first year of life. Illinois’ Breastfeeding initiative helps focus on the lifelong benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and infant. Research is clear that breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition and the perfect life-sustaining food for babies. Breastfeeding provides both nutritional and non-nutritional benefits to the infant and mother.

Breast milk is the basic foundation for infant nutrition for the first year of life. It also provides many benefits to the mother as well by helping to protect against breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and weak bones later in life. Another benefit worth mentioning is that it also helps the mother get to her pre-pregnancy shape faster.

Breastfeeding also allows you and your baby to get closer- physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger. All the while you will be helping to protect your baby from medical conditions from mild to severe, such as ear infections, gastro-intestinal problems, to childhood cancers and many other conditions.

According to the AAP breastfeeding is also associated with a reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies are born expecting to breastfeed! However, there is a “learning curve”

-MORE-

for mother and baby as they innitiate breastfeeding. This is a key opportunity for friends and family to provide support to the new mom. Expert professional support and education is also available if needed.

Practice the ABC's of Breastfeeding.

- A – Awareness to when your baby is showing signs of needing to feed and responding to those cues.
- B – Be patient and allow your baby to guide you on the journey in the early days of breastfeeding. Unlike formula feeding which is typically more scheduled, breastfeeding is driven by the babys demand.
- C – Comfort. The more comfortable and relaxed the mom is, the more enjoyable feedings will be.

Breastfeeding for any amount of time benefits both moms and babies. We congratulate all breastfeeding moms on making this choice! For more information on breastfeeding you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366.

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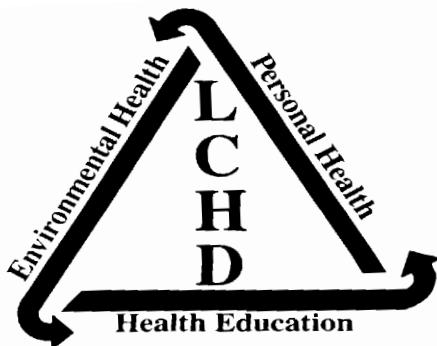


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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 7, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext.74314)
or Jenny Barrie (ext.74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"LaSalle County Health Department's Immunization Clinics"

OTTAWA, IL – August is National Immunization Awareness Month. This annual observance highlights the efforts of LaSalle County Health Department to protect patients of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases through on-time vaccination. "Don't Wait, Get Your Kids Up-to-Date" is a State wide campaign to remind parents and guardians to schedule routine vaccinations for their children ahead of the coming school year. Our goal is to have residents be fully immunized against vaccine preventable diseases.

Getting vaccinated according to the recommended immunization schedule is one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their child's health. Whether it's a baby entering a daycare facility, a toddler heading to preschool, students in elementary through High School, or even College Freshmen, parents should check their child's vaccination records. Vaccines help prevent serious diseases like measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), as well as some others. Connie Brooks, Director of Personal Health, "strongly encourages parents to schedule their child's appointment as soon as possible and avoid waiting until the last minute. This helps assure that students will enter school meeting the requirements and not risk the chance of exclusion due to noncompliance."

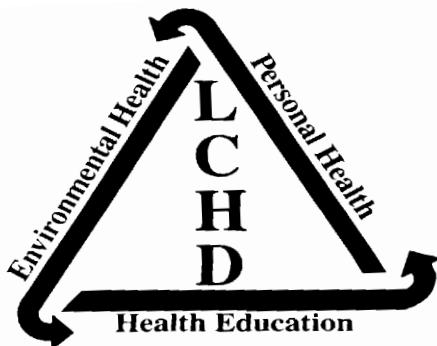
LaSalle County Health Department is located at 717 Etna Road, Ottawa, IL. It is important that you call for an appointment and bring your child's vaccination record with you on the day of the appointment. We can bill most private insurance, Medicaid, CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program), and participate in the VFC (Vaccines for Children) program.

For immunization information or appointments, call the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or check with your local healthcare provider. For information on other public health issues, visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 9, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

" Health Department Offers Free Larvicide to Property Owners Looking to Reduce Mosquito Breeding Sites. Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus in Peru."

Ottawa, IL – With an increase in West Nile virus activity this season, the LaSalle County Health Department has utilized grant funding to purchase NATULAR® DT, a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The Health Department encourages anyone who needs larvicide for their property to stop by the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa – 8:00 a.m.-4:30p.m.) to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. Each package contains 12 tablets.

At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household**. According to Clarke, NATULAR® DT tablets can be applied in many spots around a yard or property that hold water but cannot be easily tipped out. Common mosquito breeding sites around a property, especially for disease-carrying mosquitoes, only require very small amounts of water to breed. The NATULAR® DT tablets can be used to treat the following:

- Boat covers
- Floor drains
- Flower pot trays
- Ornamental ponds & water gardens
- Old and abandoned tires
- Rain barrels
- Roof top gutters
- Standing water

According to Jennie Osborn, Director of Environmental Health, "LaSalle County has been experiencing the type of weather conditions that increases West Nile virus activity. Dry, hot weather tends to accelerate the transmission of the virus during the summer and fall months. The best way to protect yourself against illness is to wear insect repellent and to get rid of any stagnant water around your home to reduce the number of mosquitoes."

Additionally, the LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Peru tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on August 9th and Environmental Health

staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	6/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	7/25/2023	CROW
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	8/3/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/9/2023	MOSQUITOES

Fight the Bite by following the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>. For questions, please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366. ####

SEE ATTACHED PHOTO of Natular® DT tablets

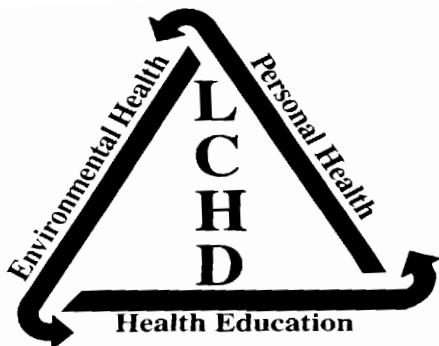
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 24, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Additional Crow and Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that a crow from Peru tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird was collected on August 23, 2023. In addition, mosquitoes collected from Mendota on August 24, 2023 have also tested positive. Environmental Health staff was able to conduct the confirmatory tests at the Health Department.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	6/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	7/25/2023	CROW
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	8/3/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/9/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/23/2023	CROW
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea,

-More-

headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

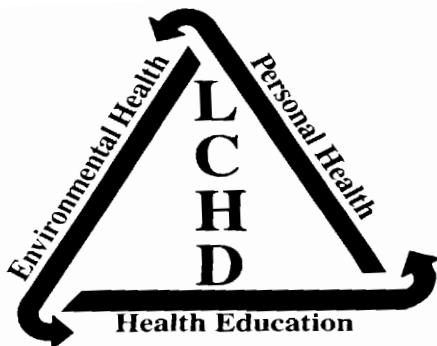
Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 28, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus in Streator”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Streator tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on August 28th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	6/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	7/25/2023	CROW
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	8/3/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/9/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/23/2023	CROW
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/28/2023	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea,

-More-

headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

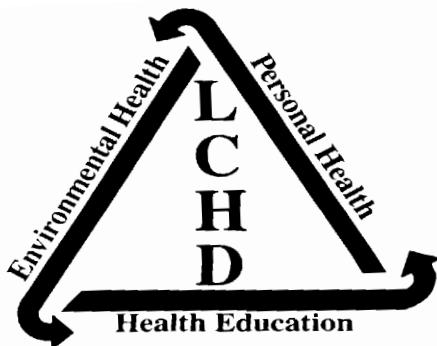
Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 31, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus in Cedar Point"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Cedar Point tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on August 30th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	6/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	7/25/2023	CROW
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	8/3/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/9/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/23/2023	CROW
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/28/2023	MOSQUITOES
CEDAR POINT	8/30/2023	MOSQUITOES

Jennie Osborn, Director of Environmental Health, reminds residents "even as we move into the fall months with fluctuating temperatures, it is important to protect yourself against mosquito bites and possible West Nile virus infection. This year, LaSalle County has consistently been experiencing the type of weather conditions that increases West Nile virus activity. Mosquito activity does slow down as temperatures drop, but until our area experiences a hard freeze you still need to protect yourself. Remember to wear insect repellent as you enjoy outdoor fall activities and sporting events."

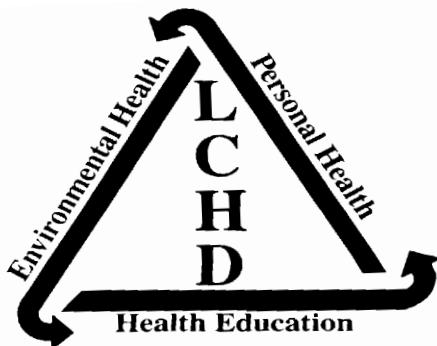
West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 31, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“29th Annual Food Service Seminar”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will be sponsoring their Twenty-Ninth Annual Food Service Seminar on September 11, 2023. The seminar will be held at Senica’s Oak Ridge, Rt. 6, LaSalle. Everyone is welcome to attend. Registration is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. The day will consist of speakers from Quick-Kill Pest Eliminators, Illinois Valley Fire and Safety LLC, FYR-FYTER, Inc., Peoria City/County Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Peoria County Government. They will provide information on Pest Control, Fire Safety, Food Freedom in the United States, Foodborne Illness Outbreaks, Food Allergens, IDPH Food Program Update, Food Waste/Composting for Food Establishments, and Reduced Oxygen Packaging.

September is National Food Safety Education Month. It provides an opportunity to raise awareness about steps that can be taken to prevent food poisoning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Food safety is an important public health priority. Foodborne illness is a common and costly problem; however, it is preventable. National public health surveillance data provides some insight into the causes of food borne illness, types of implicated foods, and where food borne outbreaks occur. This information is routinely evaluated by local health

departments in an effort to implement food safety strategies to prevent and control food borne illness within our community.

Per CDC guidelines, as you prepare and handle food, follow these four steps to help prevent foodborne illness (also called food poisoning):

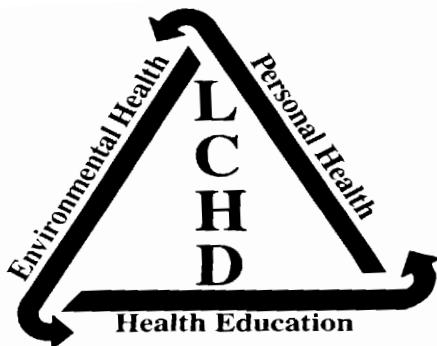
- Clean: Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often when you cook.
- Separate: Raw meat, turkey, chicken, seafood, and eggs can spread germs. Separate them from cooked food and fresh produce.
- Cook: Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs.
- Chill: Refrigerate perishable foods (foods likely to spoil or go bad quickly) and leftovers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour if the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (like a hot car or summer picnic).

For more information about National Food Safety Education Month, visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/education-month.html>. To pre-register for the food service seminar, please call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366 or visit www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 1, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus in Oglesby"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Oglesby tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on September 1st and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2023:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	06/2/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	06/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	6/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	07/12/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/21/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	7/25/2023	CROW
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	7/27/2023	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	8/3/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/9/2023	MOSQUITOES
PERU	8/23/2023	CROW
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
MENDOTA	8/24/2023	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/28/2023	MOSQUITOES
CEDAR POINT	8/30/2023	MOSQUITOES
OGLESBY	9/1/2023	MOSQUITOES

-More-

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of Culex mosquitoes, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who see a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

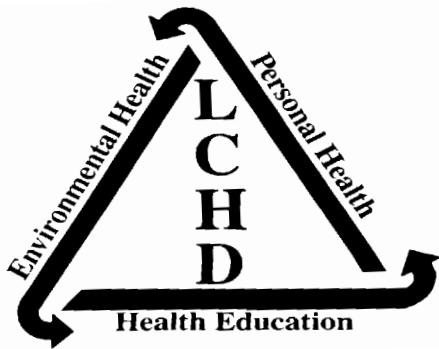
There are some simple precautions you can take to Fight the Bite. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - 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. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, old tires, stagnant pools, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>. For questions, please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366. ####

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 15, 2023

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366

For Immediate Release

“Walk-In Flu Vaccination Available – No Appointment Needed”

Ottawa, IL - The LaSalle County Health Department is offering walk-in flu vaccination clinics. Flu vaccines will be available:

- Tuesday, September 26, 2023 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 3, 2023 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

The Health Department is located at 717 Etna Rd., Ottawa.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine and Influenza HD (High Dose) Vaccine for persons 65 and older are available. In addition, VFC (Vaccine for Children or CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) Flu vaccine is available. This would be for children 6 months through 18 years of age who have Medicaid.

All LaSalle County Health Department influenza vaccines are preservative free. The fee for the seasonal flu shot will be \$25. The fee for influenza High Dose will be \$60.

We offer insurance billing or cash payment. **You must have your insurance card and a Photo ID with you.** No Doctor's order is required. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

To lessen your chances of developing the flu, adults and children need to practice good hygiene measures. Teach the importance of covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and educate children about hand to mucous membrane transmission. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children is through frequent and thorough hand washing. People who are exhibiting “flu-like” symptoms should stay home from work, out of childcare and school to minimize transmission.

Remember the 3 C's: clean, cover, and contain:

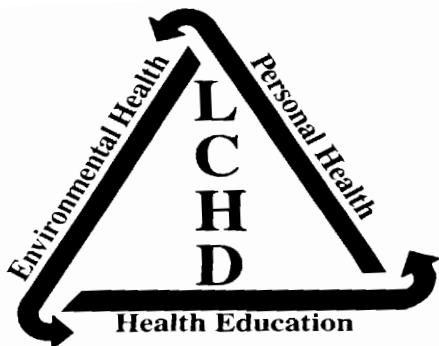
- **Clean** –frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Cover** –cover your cough and sneeze.
- **Contain** –contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

For additional information please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org. ####

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 17, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month”

OTTAWA, IL – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women other than skin cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women. The good news is that most women can survive breast cancer if it is found and treated early.

A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. Low-income women and women with no insurance die from breast and cervical cancer more often than other women. These high mortality rates are attributed in part to the fact that these women generally do not receive regular mammograms and Pap Smears. As a result, cancers are diagnosed at later stages when it is more difficult to treat and the chances for survival are less.

LaSalle County Health Department, through our Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) grant, can pay for mammograms and pap smears for women who qualify. You may qualify if you are a LaSalle or Grundy County resident between the ages of 21-64 for breast and cervical cancer screenings. Through IBCCP, LaSalle County Health Department is working to increase breast and cervical cancer awareness and break that cycle of late-stage treatment. IBCCP provides FREE mammograms and Pap Smears for those women who qualify and assistance with paying their deductible for those who are insured. Take advantage of this opportunity for early detection. You are important to your family.

Call (815) 433-3366 for further information on how to receive a free mammogram and pap test.

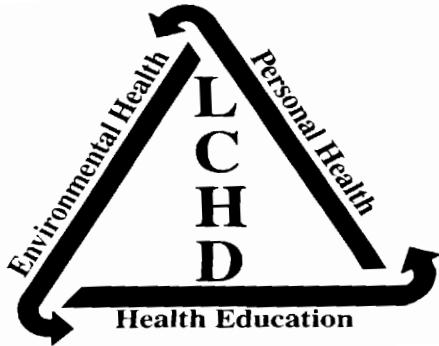
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www.lasallecountyil.gov



MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 19, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"LaSalle County Health Department has the new Fall 2023 COVID Vaccine"

LaSalle County Health Department will begin offering the new Fall 2023 COVID Moderna vaccine on a weekly basis, **by appointment only**. It will be offered on Wednesdays, beginning October 25, 2023 from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm. The Fall 2023 COVID vaccine has been authorized for people ages 6 months and older.

To schedule an appointment for a Fall 2023 COVID vaccination please visit our website www.lasallecountyil.gov and click on the “COVID-19 Resources/Updates” from the homepage icon. There you will find links to schedule an appointment for the vaccine. Medicare and Medicaid will cover the cost of the vaccine. If you have private health insurance you need to call your health insurance provider to see if the cost will be covered for the new COVID vaccine. If your insurance will cover the vaccine, you need to bring proof of insurance coverage and your insurance card with you so that we can bill your insurance, otherwise you will be charged \$191.00 the day of your appointment. The LaSalle County Health Department participates in the IDPH Bridge Access Program.

Important Things to Remember:

- You **MUST** have your vaccination record card for your appointment.
- If you **do not have it**, please visit IDPH Vax Verify at:
https://idphportal.illinois.gov/s/?language=en_US to get a copy of your vaccination record.

Day of Appointment Instructions:

- ✓ If you do not feel well the day of your appointment, cancel your appointment.
- ✓ **Please arrive at your scheduled appointment time.**
- ✓ The Health Department is located at 717 Etna Rd., Ottawa.
- ✓ If the patient is under the age of 18, they must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- ✓ **PLEASE BRING:**

- ✓ Bring your health insurance card and proof of new COVID vaccine coverage (if applicable)
- ✓ Bring your vaccination record card
- You **MUST** have an APPOINTMENT to get vaccinated.
- Individuals should wear clothing to allow easy access to the upper portion of the arm for injection.

For additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

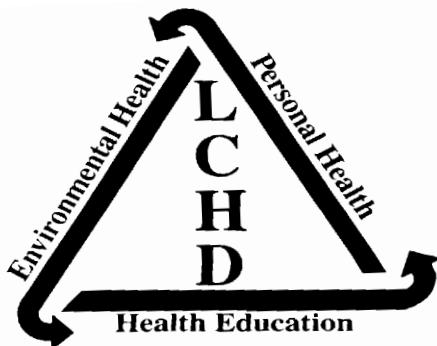
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: November 28, 2023
To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ex 74315) or Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“World AIDS Day”

OTTAWA, IL --World AIDS Day is December 1, 2023. It is a day of solidarity for people around the world who are affected by HIV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this is a day for voices to unite by sharing experiences, remembering those lost, and standing together in the fight against HIV. While great strides have been made over the four decades since the first known reported cases of AIDS, this disease remains a public health challenge. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for every community and each individual to honor the more than 32 million people who have died worldwide from AIDS-related illness.

Increased knowledge of the disease and improved diagnostic and treatment methods have led to significant advances in the clinical management of HIV and a delay in the progression from HIV to AIDS, and thus, individuals receiving treatment in the U.S. are living longer. In the role of prevention, it is important for individuals to know their HIV status since many individuals remain free of clinical signs for months to years.

HIV is spread by the exchange of blood, semen, or vaginal secretions between individuals. The most common routes of transmission are 1) having unprotected sex with an infected person, 2) sharing drug injection equipment with an infected person, and 3) from mother to infant at the time of birth or through breastfeeding.

LaSalle County Health Department offers free, confidential HIV testing and counseling services to individuals at risk who are 12 years of age and older. Individuals may call 815-433-3366 to schedule an appointment. For more information you can also visit our website at www.lasallecountyl.gov.

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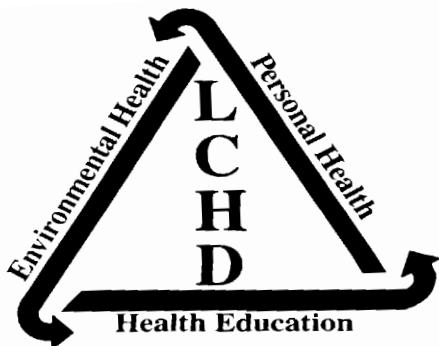
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www.lasallecountyl.org

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: December 11, 2023
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"Lone Star Tick Found in LaSalle County"

Ottawa, IL – Last week, LaSalle County Health Department Environmental Health staff was notified by the Illinois Department of Public Health that a Lone Star tick was collected during a tick drag conducted earlier this year. All ticks that are collected during the drags are submitted to the University of Illinois - Illinois Tick Surveillance Program for identification and disease surveillance data collection. The tick, which was collected in May, is the first Lone star tick to be identified in LaSalle County.

Tick drags help determine which ticks of public health concern can be found in the county. LaSalle County Health Department plans to conduct additional tick drags in 2024. Future tick drags will focus on looking for additional Lone star ticks to determine if there is an established population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) criteria for "established" ticks is at least six ticks or two life stages (larvae, nymphs, adults) collected in a single year. Criteria for "reported" ticks is the identification of one to five ticks of the same life stage.

While this information comes at a time of the year when the risk is minimal, it is important to keep in mind as the weather begins to warm up next year and individuals are spending more time outdoors. According to the IDPH Tick Surveillance website, Lone star ticks can transmit *Ehrlichia chaffeensis* and *Ehrlichia ewingii* (which cause human Ehrlichiosis), *Francisella tularensis* (tularemia), Heartland virus (Heartland Virus disease), Bourbon virus (Bourbon virus disease), and Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI). Lone star ticks are very aggressive ticks that bite humans. The adult female is distinguished by a white dot or "lone star" on her back. The nymph and adult females most frequently bite humans.

Growing evidence suggests that alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) may be triggered by the bite of lone star ticks; however, other tick species have not been ruled out. The lone star tick is most active from April through the end of July. The lone star tick is not believed to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*). Anyone experiencing a rash or any unexplained illness accompanied by fever following a tick bite, should consult their physician.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has an interactive map where this data can be found at: https://idph.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=976061db733441eb977ef5cf2facd5c4&fbclid=id=lwAR2_Na7k-1wCC1KelkuArMznHc6voaZvkZ-sehe_el1xGwx_aDwr6Pyyl.

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