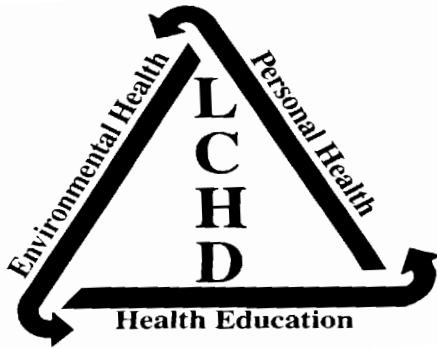


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: November 13, 2025
To: All Media
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For Immediate Release

"Health Department Confirms First Case of West Nile Virus"

Ottawa, IL – LaSalle County Health Department has confirmed its first human case of West Nile virus this year. A resident in their 60's tested positive for West Nile virus. Human West Nile virus cases were previously reported in LaSalle County:

Year	Number of Human Cases
2018	1*
2017	1
2016	1
2014	1
2013	1
2007	2
2006	1
2005	1
2004	5
2003	1
2002	11

*First human case and death

Additionally, this summer and fall, mosquitoes tested positive for the virus throughout the county.

According to Jennifer Arroyo, Director of Environmental Health, "the confirmation of a human case in the late fall is not surprising due to the prolonged warmer temperatures we experienced

-more-

this season. However, with temperatures dropping below freezing in recent weeks, mosquito activity has come to a close and the risk of contracting West Nile virus is very low. As we look forward to the spring season and warmer weather in 2026, it is important to remember 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.”

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, 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 paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by 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, 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, 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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