

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 2, 2022
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”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Grand Ridge tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on August 31st 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

-More-

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/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>.

###



www.facebook.com/LaSalleCountyHealth



www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

www.lasallecountyil.gov