

This news release was sent out statewide to the media this afternoon. All of our news releases are available on the ISDH Web site at: www.statehealth.IN.gov.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN WEST NILE VIRUS STILL A CONCERN

INDIANAPOLIS—State health officials are reminding Hoosiers to stay vigilant in protecting themselves from West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases. A second human case of West Nile virus has been reported in the state (Marion County), and mosquito groups have recently tested positive in 25 counties across the state.

“The recent increase in positive West Nile virus mosquitoes suggests there is an increased risk for human cases,” said Jennifer House, DVM, director, Zoonotic & Environmental Epidemiology at the Indiana State Department of Health. “The best thing people can do to prevent getting infected with West Nile virus is to take some simple steps to protect themselves from being bitten by a mosquito. These steps include: apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus to clothes and exposed skin; and avoid being outdoors during prime mosquito biting times, dusk to dawn, when possible.”

The West Nile virus usually causes West Nile fever, a milder form of the illness, which can include fever, headache, body aches, swollen lymph glands, or a rash. However, a small number of individuals can develop a more severe form of the disease with encephalitis or meningitis and other neurological syndromes, including flaccid muscle paralysis. Health officials report individuals age 50 and over are at greatest risk for serious illness and even death from West Nile virus. However, people of all ages can be and have been infected with the virus.

Dr. House says people should still practice these precautions:

- Discard old tires, tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or other unused containers that can hold water;
- Repair failed septic systems;
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers left outdoors;
- Keep grass cut short and shrubbery trimmed;
- Clean clogged roof gutters, particularly if leaves tend to plug up the drains;
- Frequently replace the water in pet bowls;
- Flush ornamental fountains and birdbaths periodically; and
- Aerate ornamental pools, or stock them with predatory fish.

For more information, visit the Indiana State Department of Health Web site at www.statehealth.in.gov.

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