



**McHenry County Department of Health**

2200 N. Seminary Avenue, Woodstock IL 60098

Phone 815-334-4510 Fax 815-334-4635

[www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info)

[www.twitter.com/mchenrycohealth](http://www.twitter.com/mchenrycohealth)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**May 27, 2010**

Contact: Debra Quackenbush

815-334-4456; cell 815-236-3238

## Hot Weather Sets the Stage for West Nile Virus

**Woodstock IL** – A mix of hot weather and recent rain is the perfect breeding ground for the Culex mosquito which can carry the West Nile virus (WNV). Residents should protect themselves and their families as the risk of mosquito-borne WNV will last until the first hard frost. McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) began its WNV surveillance program on Friday May 21 placing mosquito traps throughout the County which are monitored several times a week. Mosquitoes are collected, identified and tested for WNV. MCDH also collects a limited number of dead birds each year (robins, crows, blue jays) which are submitted to the University of Illinois for testing. Two birds and 7 mosquito pool samples have been tested to date; results were negative.

State-wide, 5 counties have reported birds positive for WNV – Stephenson, Carroll and Jo Davies (west) and the southern Counties of Greene and St. Clair. No human West Nile virus cases have been reported by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) as of May 26. In 2009, IDPH reported 5 human cases, 404 mosquito pools, 26 birds and 6 horses. Additional information can be found at the IDPH website [www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm). Last year, McHenry County had no reported cases of WNV.

The incubation period for West Nile is 3 to 12 days. Most people with the virus have mild symptoms and include fever, headache and body aches. More serious illnesses, such as encephalitis, meningitis and death, are possible. People over age 50 and those with chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer are more at-risk for serious illness but **anyone can contract WNV**. The best way to reduce the risk is to limit the number of mosquitoes around the home and to take precaution to avoid mosquito bites.

Residents can reduce their risk of becoming infected by avoiding mosquito bites.

- Wear shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors for long periods of time
- Avoid outdoor activities when Culex mosquitoes are most active (dusk and dawn)
- Spray clothing with insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Drain standing water around your home where mosquitoes will breed (bird baths, garbage cans, wheelbarrows, clogged gutters, flower pot trays)
- Make sure doors and windows have tight fitting screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

Local information about West Nile virus can be found on the MCDH website [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info), link to Environmental Health.

###