



Office of the Will County Board
Herbert Brooks, Jr., Speaker
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Board reminds residents of West Nile Virus prevention tips

Mosquitoes in Bolingbrook are first to test positive in county this year

JOLIET, IL – Will County Board members are reminding residents to protect themselves against the West Nile virus this summer, as health officials today confirmed mosquitoes in Bolingbrook are the first to test positive in the county this year. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) yesterday also confirmed the first West Nile virus positive bird in Illinois this year in Waterloo, near St. Louis.

"Cases of West Nile virus increase every year, and I believe educating the public on how best to protect themselves is our best line of defense," said Speaker Herbert Brooks. "Will County Environmental Health is monitoring the mosquito population and will report when any samples test positive for the virus."

The Environmental Health Division of the Will County Health Department conducts weekly monitoring at more than a dozen locations throughout the county. In addition, surveillance of dead birds is performed to test for the West Nile virus. Last year, Will County had 11 cases of the virus. Since 2005, Will County has had 66 cases of human WNV infections and two fatalities. In Illinois, there has been at least 1976 human cases and 120 deaths.

Board member Bob Howard (D-Beecher) believes county residents can help fight back against the increasing number of WNV cases. "Simple steps such as reducing standing water in your yard and removing excess grass and yard clippings can go a long way. In addition, wearing long sleeves and pants while outside along with insect repellent can help protect you against getting infected."

The Will County Health Department offers these recommendations to residents:

- **TIP.** Reduce standing water to eliminate mosquito threats. Pay special attention to potential breeding spaces in children's sand boxes, wagons, or plastic toys; underneath or around downspouts, plant saucers and pet food containers. Other hot spots include: gutters, flat roofs and low ground underneath decks and porches.
- **TOSS.** Remove excess grass, leaves, firewood, and yard clippings. Lawn debris can create places for water to accumulate.
- **TURN.** Turn over larger yard items that can hold water. These items include portable sand boxes and plastic toys.

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- REMOVE TARPS. If tarps stretched over firewood piles, boats, grills, or sports equipment are not taut, they are holding water. Always shake out tarps immediately following a rainstorm.

Residents are encouraged to report potential cases of WNV. Will County has established an automated information line at 815-740-7631. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists varying degrees of symptoms. About one in 150 people with WNV experience the most serious that include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, and paralysis. Milder symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, and possible skin rashes are experienced by up to 20 percent of people infected.

For more information about WNV, visit www.idph.state.il.us.

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