

News



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Connecticut Department of Public Health
Contact: Maura Fitzgerald Downes (860) 509-7270

TWO MORE HUMAN CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN CT: FIRST CASE INVOLVING A CHILD DIAGNOSED THIS SEASON

HARTFORD - The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that two Connecticut residents have tested positive this week for West Nile virus (WNV) infection, bringing the total for this season to five human WNV cases. The most recent case was diagnosed in a child from Newington, who became ill earlier this month with fever and headache. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of WNV antibodies in the child. The child, who is between 5-10 years of age, was not hospitalized.

The other patient, who is between 50-60 years of age and a resident of Monroe, became ill during the second week of August with meningitis and was hospitalized. The patient is still hospitalized but improving. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of antibodies to WNV. Neither of the new cases traveled out of the area before becoming ill.

“Labor Day weekend is a great time to be outdoors, but please take precautions to prevent mosquito bites, and if you are a parent, that includes your kids,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino. “I would also like to encourage our municipalities to treat storm drains with larvicides, this will help reduce the number of mosquitoes that can transmit WNV in September, especially if hot, humid weather continues. The WNV season will not end until the first hard frost in the fall.”

West Nile virus has been detected in the state every year since 1999. Before 2018, 134 human cases of WNV were diagnosed in Connecticut residents including three fatalities. Last year, three Connecticut residents were diagnosed with WNV infection. For more information on WNV human cases in CT, click [here](#).

What are the symptoms of WNV?

- **Serious Symptoms in a Few People.** About 1 in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.
- **Milder Symptoms in Some People.** Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will have symptoms which can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days to as long as several weeks.
- **No Symptoms in Most People.** Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all, but there is no way to know in advance if you will develop an illness or not.

Tips for reducing mosquitoes around homes

Mosquitoes require water for reproduction. The following are measures that can help reduce mosquitoes:

- Eliminate standing water suitable for mosquitoes. Dispose of water-holding containers, such as ceramic pots, used tires, and tire swings.
- Drill holes in the bottom of containers such as those used for recycling.
- Clean clogged roof gutters.
- Turn over objects that may trap water when not in use, such as wading pools and wheelbarrows.
- Change water in bird baths on a weekly basis.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools. When pools are not in use, use pool covers and drain when necessary.

Tips for avoiding mosquito bites when outdoors

Mosquitoes require a blood meal for reproduction. The following are measures that can help reduce bites from mosquitoes that feed on people:

- Be particularly careful at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing material should be tightly woven.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors.
- Consider the use of CDC-recommended mosquito repellents, containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535, or 2-undecanone, and apply according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.
- When using DEET, use the lowest concentration effective for the time spent outdoors (for example, 6 percent lasts approximately two hours and 20 percent for four hours) and wash treated skin when returning indoors. Do not apply under clothing, to wounds or irritated skin, the hands of children, or to infants less than two months old.
- Also, be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair to avoid mosquito bites when indoors.

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. These agencies are responsible for monitoring the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday through Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at <http://www.ct.gov/caes/mosquitotesting>.

For information on West Nile virus and how to prevent mosquito bites, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program Web site at www.ct.gov/mosquito.

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