News

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FOUR MORE HUMAN CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS IDENTIFIED IN CONNECTICUT
Total so far for the season stands at 10 human cases of West Nile Virus

Hartford - The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that it has learned of four more Connecticut residents who have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) infection, bringing the total for this season to ten human WNV cases.

Two of the patients are from Bridgeport, one is from Durham, and one is from Southington. The four patients range in age from 50-70+, and three of the four required hospitalization. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of WNV antibodies in all four patients. The Bridgeport and Durham patients became ill in mid to late August, and the Southington patient became ill in the second week of September.

"It's a great time to be outside as we move into autumn, temperatures start to cool off and Connecticut's fair season is in full swing, but it's also important to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites," said DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino. "You can reduce your risk of WNV by using insect repellent and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants to prevent mosquito bites. Severe illness can occur in people of any age, but children and people over 60 are at greater risk. The WNV season doesn't end until the first hard frost of 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.