



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ODH Reports First 2015 Death in a Human West Nile Virus Case**

### *ODH Urges Precautions to Prevent Mosquito-borne Diseases*

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohio’s first death in a 2015 human West Nile virus (WNV) case was reported today by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). The 91-year-old Williams County man was hospitalized with encephalitis.

There have been eight reported human cases of WNV in Ohio this year in six counties – Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Lorain and Williams. In recent years, Ohio reported 11 human WNV cases in 2014, 24 in 2013, and 122 in 2012.

The primary way people get WNV is through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people who become infected with WNV do not have any symptoms. About one in five people who become infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than 1 percent of infected people develop a serious neurologic illness, such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

“This time of the year, the risk of West Nile virus infection increases, and individuals should take reasonable precautions to avoid mosquito bites and eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites,” said ODH Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio.

Here are some tips to avoid mosquito bites:

- If you are outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, shoes and socks.
- Wear light-colored clothing, which is less attractive to mosquitoes.
- Use EPA-registered mosquito repellent and follow the label directions.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Here are some tips to eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home:

- Eliminate standing water.
- Empty or remove water-holding containers, such as buckets, unused flower pots and bird baths.
- Make sure all roof gutters are clean and draining properly.
- Keep child wading pools empty and on their sides when not being used.

Learn more about mosquitoes and WNV on the ODH website at [www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv).

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