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Ohio Reports First Human West Nile Virus Case in 2017

ODH Urges Precautions to Prevent Mosquito-Borne Diseases

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s first human West Nile virus case in 2017 is being reported by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). A 44-year-old man from Clermont County is recovering from the West Nile virus infection and did not require hospitalization. Clermont County Public Health will conduct an environmental assessment in the affected area and implement mosquito control measures.

This year, 29 Ohio counties have reported West Nile virus activity reported in mosquitoes collected as part of statewide surveillance. Last year, ODH reported 17 human West Nile virus cases.

The primary way people get West Nile virus is through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people who become infected with West Nile virus 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). There are no medications to treat or vaccines to prevent West Nile virus infection.

“This time of year, we could possibly see a growing number of human cases of West Nile virus infection and positive mosquito samples throughout the state,” said ODH State Epidemiologist and Bureau Chief of Infectious Disease Sietske de Fijter. “This case serves to remind Ohioans that they should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites and eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites in order to prevent mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile virus.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 28 states have reported more than 200 combined human West Nile virus cases so far in 2017, as well as West Nile virus infections in mosquitoes and the birds who infect them.

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 West Nile virus on the ODH website at www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv.