



News Release

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First 2016 Ohio Death in a Human West Nile Virus Case

ODH Urges Precautions to Prevent Mosquito-Borne Diseases

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s first 2016 death in a human West Nile virus (WNV) case was reported today by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). The 84-year-old Cuyahoga County man had been hospitalized with encephalitis.

There have been four reported human cases of WNV in Ohio this year in three counties – Cuyahoga, Hamilton and Marion. In recent years, Ohio reported 35 human WNV cases in 2015, 11 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 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.

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