



News Release

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Ohio's Wet Summer Leading to Rise in Mosquitoes; ODH Urges Precautions to Prevent Mosquito-borne Diseases

Mosquitoes in 5 local health districts have tested positive for West Nile virus

COLUMBUS – Ohio is experiencing a rise in mosquitoes this summer due to heavy rains. Mosquito pools from five local health jurisdictions across the state have tested positive thus far for the West Nile virus (WNV): Columbus (1), Franklin County (1), Richland County (1), Summit County (3), and Licking County (2). To date, no human cases of West Nile virus have been reported in 2015. Ohio had 11 confirmed cases of West Nile virus in people in 2014.

The primary way people get the West Nile virus is when someone is bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. About 1 in 5 people who are infected with WNV will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than 1% of infected people develop a serious neurologic illness, such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

Rains have caused standing water in many areas of Ohio, and mosquitoes breed and multiply in such water. Floodwater species such as *Aedes vexans* can become extremely abundant under such conditions.

“These positive tests in mosquitoes for West Nile virus are a good reminder that arbovirus season is underway and individuals should take precautions – use insect repellents, limit exposure when mosquitoes are active, and remove breeding sources – to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites,” said ODH Medical Director Mary DiOrio, M.D. “There is more mosquito activity now than we’ve seen at this time of year for several years – but still much lower than in our WNV outbreak years of 2002 and 2012.”

Here are some tips to avoid possible infection from mosquito bites:

- o Wear EPA-registered mosquito repellents whenever mosquitoes are present and follow label instructions.
- o Wear long, loose, light-colored clothing.
- o Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside.

Here are some tips to help reduce mosquito breeding around your home:

- o Remove temporary pools of water around your house and yard. Include clearing debris from ditches, cutting small channels to help pooling water drain, or filling in holes and tire ruts with dirt.
- o Keep children’s wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren’t being used.
- o Empty standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths.

Learn more about mosquitoes and the West Nile Virus on the ODH website at; www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv.

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