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N E W S

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ODH CONFIRMS WEST NILE VIRUS IN MOSQUITOES IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Ohioans reminded to take steps to prevent mosquito bites

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Zoonotic Disease Program has confirmed the first evidence of West Nile virus (WNV) in Ohio in 2009 in a mosquito pool collected in Franklin County.

To date, no human or horse cases of WNV have been confirmed, but these results remind us of the need for Ohioans to take steps to protect themselves against mosquito bites and eliminate standing water to reduce their chances of WNV infection. Ohio has recorded human cases of WNV each year since 2002 when there were 441 cases. There were 108 in 2003, 12 in 2004, 61 in 2005, 48 in 2006, 23 in 2007 and 15 in 2008.

“West Nile virus is unpredictable, but it is also preventable,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “I urge all Ohioans to take some simple steps to protect themselves and their loved ones. Remember, you can only get West Nile from the bite of an infected mosquito.”

To avoid possible infection from 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. Light colors are least attractive to mosquitoes. Use insect repellent and follow the label directions.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites near your home: Remove all discarded tires and other water-holding containers, such as tin cans and unused flower pots, from your property. Eliminate standing water from your property. Make sure all roof gutters are clean and properly draining. Clean and chlorinate pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. Keep them empty when not in use and drain water from pool covers. Change water in bird baths weekly.

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