

HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORT EVIDENCE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN CLARK COUNTY

Jeffersonville---Clark County health officials announced that a mosquito pool has tested positive for the West Nile virus. This is the first sign of the virus in Clark County this year.

Dr. Kevin R. Burke, Clark County Health Officer, stated “citizens should take appropriate precautions to avoid mosquito bites and there is no human vaccine and no cure for West Nile virus infection, but it can be prevented.”

Health officials continue to urge county residents to take the following protective steps when they are outdoors:

- Avoid being outdoors during prime mosquito biting times, dusk to dawn, when possible;
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus to clothes and exposed skin; and
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that have first bitten an infected bird. A person bitten by an infected mosquito may show symptoms three to 15 days after the bite. State health officials say that in previous years, most human cases of West Nile virus were reported between mid-July and mid-September.

The virus usually results in a mild illness known as West Nile fever, which can cause fever, headache, body aches, swollen lymph glands, or a rash. However, a small number of individuals can develop a more severe form of the disease with encephalitis or meningitis and other neurological syndromes, including flaccid muscle paralysis.

County health officials are also asking residents to take steps to rid their properties of potential mosquito breeding grounds by:

- Repairing failed septic systems;
- Drilling holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors;
- Keeping grass cut short and shrubbery trimmed;
- Disposing of old tires, tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or other unused containers that can hold water;
- Cleaning clogged roof gutters, particularly if leaves tend to plug up the drains; and
- Aerating ornamental pools, or stock them with predatory fish.

Health officials report that although individuals over age 50 are at greatest risk for serious illness and even death from West Nile virus, people of all ages have been infected with the virus and have had severe disease.

Visit <http://www.in.gov/isdh/healthinfo/westnile/counties/92mapx.htm> for updated information on West Nile virus activity in Indiana.