



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Second Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported to the Health Department



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Take steps to avoid mosquito bites

BURLINGTON – For the second time this year, a case of West Nile virus disease in a Windsor County resident has been reported to the Vermont Department of Health. The individual was hospitalized in mid-July and was diagnosed with neuroinvasive West Nile virus disease, which is a more serious form of the illness that affects the nervous system.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitos that carry West Nile virus can be found throughout the state. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets began conducting mosquito surveillance throughout the state in June. So far this season no mosquito pools have tested positive for West Nile virus or Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

While most people who are infected do not become ill, about 20 percent develop symptoms including high fever, muscle aches, headache and fatigue. Fewer than 1 percent who are infected develop the more severe illness that affects the nervous system and can be fatal. When the nervous system is involved, symptoms may include disorientation, coma, tremors, seizures, or paralysis.

In years past, West Nile virus has been found in every county in Vermont and the risk of illness has typically been highest in the late summer. “The fact that two residents from Windsor County have fallen ill this early in the year is unusual”, said Bradley Tompkins, infectious disease epidemiologist. “It is important for people across the state, particularly those in the Windsor County area, to take the appropriate steps now to prevent mosquito bites.”

What you can do to avoid mosquito bites:

- Limit your time outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when outdoors while mosquitoes are biting.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents that are labeled as effective against mosquitoes. Use repellents that contain no more than 30 percent DEET for adults and children. Do not use DEET on infants younger than 2 months of age. Repellents with picaridin and lemon eucalyptus are also effective.
- Get rid of standing water, and drain areas where water can pool: rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, etc. This is where mosquitoes breed.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

For more information about West Nile virus, other mosquito-borne diseases, and insect repellents, visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/arbovirus>

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