



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



West Nile Virus Detected in Addison County Mosquito Pool



News Release: July 19, 2013

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health announced today that West Nile virus was detected in mosquitoes collected on July 10 from a trap in Leicester. This is the first detection of West Nile virus this year in Vermont.

Eastern equine encephalitis virus has not been detected so far in 2013.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, and three people became ill with the infection in 2012.

“Although West Nile virus tends to be less severe than Eastern equine encephalitis, it can still cause significant illness,” said Erica Berl, an epidemiologist for the Health Department.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has been trapping mosquitoes in southern Addison and northern Rutland Counties since the middle of June. Mosquito surveillance has been increased this summer in response to the two fatal human cases of Eastern equine encephalitis that occurred in 2012.

A total of 110 batches of mosquitoes have been tested for both viruses so far this year. Limited trapping and testing is also being done in Franklin County.

The state will also help arrange testing for people or horses with symptoms consistent with a West Nile virus infection. Since Vermont’s first human case of West Nile virus was reported in 2002, the virus has been detected in mosquito pools in every county in the state.

The Health Department recommends that all Vermonters take precautions to avoid mosquito bites:

- Wear long sleeves and pants and avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are active.
- Reduce mosquito breeding habitats by getting rid of standing water, and by draining areas where water can pool such as rain gutters, wading pools, and old tires.
- Use insect repellents that are safe and effective against mosquitoes. Products with a registration number from the Environmental Protection Agency on the label have been evaluated for safety and effectiveness. Repellents containing DEET in concentrations up to 30%, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 can be used to prevent mosquito bites.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

There is a vaccine for horses, and horse owners should discuss vaccination with their veterinarians.

Symptoms of West Nile virus are often mild, but can include high fever, muscle aches, headache and fatigue. Approximately 1 percent of people who are infected develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system, which can be fatal.

For more information on West Nile virus, health news, alerts and information visit healthvermont.gov

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