



For Immediate Release: July 21, 2017

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Mosquito Pools Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Know how to protect yourself from mosquito bites

BURLINGTON – Mosquitoes collected in Weathersfield, Brattleboro and Hardwick have tested positive for West Nile virus. These are the first detections of the mosquito-borne virus this year. There have been no positive test results for Eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEE) this surveillance season.

The infected mosquitoes were collected by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets as part of the State’s arbovirus surveillance program. The testing is performed by the Department of Health Laboratory.

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Over the years, the virus has been found in every county in the state. Eight cases of West Nile virus in Vermont residents have been reported since 2011, though no human case of illness from West Nile virus or EEE virus has been confirmed so far this year.

Mosquito trapping for this surveillance season began on June 6, with 896 pools having been tested. In 2016, the State tested 3,243 mosquito pools. Of those, 19 were positive for West Nile virus and none tested positive for EEE virus.

“West Nile virus appears in mosquitoes in Vermont every year, so it is not a surprise to find it again,” said Bradley Tompkins, infectious disease epidemiologist with the Department of Health. “All the rain we’ve had this year is good for mosquitoes, and that makes it especially important for everyone to do what they can to prevent getting bitten,” Tompkins said.

Protect yourself against risk of disease by taking simple steps to prevent mosquito bites:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.

- Limit the amount of time you spend outdoors at dawn and dusk.
- Use insect repellent. Check EPA.gov for safe and effective repellents.
- Cover baby carriages or outdoor playpens with mosquito netting.
- Mosquito-proof your home. Fix holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached to doors and windows.
- Get rid of standing water. Drain water from gutters, old tires, wading pools and other places where mosquitoes can breed.

For more tips and information about preventing mosquito bites and disease, visit healthvermont.gov/mosquito.

Learn more about mosquitoes from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets: agriculture.vermont.gov/plant_pest/mosquitoes_ticks/mosquitoes.

For health news, alerts and information, visit healthvermont.gov

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NOTE: News release was updated July 24, 2017, to include Hardwick. Those results were received two hours after the original news release was distributed.