



First human case of West Nile Virus confirmed in Oakland County

Oakland County, Michigan sent this bulletin at 09/24/2019 04:06 PM EDT

For Immediate Release



NEWS RELEASE
OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE DAVID COULTER
Leigh-Anne Stafford, Health Officer

First human case of West Nile Virus confirmed in Oakland County

Pontiac, Mich., Sept. 24, 2019 – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has confirmed a human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a 70-year-old Oakland County man, Oakland County Health Division announced today. This is the first human case of WNV in Oakland County in 2019, and the fourth this year in Michigan.

“This is an important reminder that West Nile Virus is present in our community,” said Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County Health Division. “We strongly encourage residents to protect themselves from mosquitoes until the first hard frost of the year.”

No further information is available about the patient because of health privacy laws.

Residents, especially older adults, are urged to protect themselves from mosquito bites by following these instructions:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent. All EPA-registered insect repellents are evaluated for safety and effectiveness, and will contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol as the active ingredient. Repellents containing a higher percentage of the active ingredient typically provide longer-lasting protection.

Always follow the product label instructions.

- Be careful using repellent on the hands of children as it may irritate the eyes and mouth.
- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Limit outdoor activity from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Maintain window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of buildings. Do not prop open doors.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus. Mosquitoes are infected with the virus by biting an infected bird. The virus is then spread to humans through the bite of the infected mosquito. Most people who are infected with the virus have either no symptoms or experience a mild illness such as fever, headache, and body aches. However, in some individuals, a more serious disease-causing inflammation and swelling of the brain can develop. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious and potentially life-threatening symptoms of West Nile Virus if they do get sick.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is another mosquito-borne disease that continues to be reported in Michigan this year in humans, with eight cases and three fatalities confirmed in Southwest Michigan. No cases of EEE have been reported in Oakland County. EEE is one of the most dangerous mosquito-borne diseases in the United States, with a 33 percent fatality rate in people who become ill. People can be infected with EEE from the bite of a mosquito carrying the viruses. Persons younger than age 15 and over age 50 are at greatest risk of severe disease following infection. Signs of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches which can progress to a severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should visit their physician's office.

For more information about West Nile Virus and EEE, visit www.oakgov.com/health or call Nurse on Call at 800-848- 5533, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For up-to-date public health information, follow @publichealthOC on Facebook and Twitter.

For media inquiries only, please contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County media & communications officer, at (248) 858-1048.

###
