
Press Release

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RESIDENTS URGED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST MOSQUITO BITES

Health Department Reports Two Birds Test Positive for West Nile Virus

The Burlington County Health Department today renewed its message that residents take all precautions to prevent mosquito bites after learning this week that two birds collected in the County, one in Moorestown and the other in Willingboro, tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

No people in the county have tested positive for WNV or Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) this year, according to Health Officer Robert Gogats, but reducing the risk of WNV and EEE remains a priority none-the-less.

“Since the threat of West Nile Virus and Triple E from mosquito bites occur in warmer weather months, we want to remind people to apply repellent when outdoors, especially around dawn and dusk,” he said.

Residents are urged to wear protective clothing when outdoors, to keep screen doors and windows in good condition, to clean gutters and pools, and to remove any standing water that can provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Gogats said that the Mosquito Control Division, which is responsible for mosquito surveillance and treatment, began its annual ground and aerial larvicide treatment and monitoring in the early spring and continue to treat where needed.

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The division also continues to collect and test mosquito samplings, having turned up a total 28 positive findings for WNV in 14 locations around the County this season, and another 2 for EEE in Bass River.

County Epidemiologist Jennifer Horner said residents also should be aware of the symptoms of WNV and to seek medical attention if they experience symptoms. Mild symptoms may include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands.

While most infections are mild, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are most susceptible to more severe symptoms. More severe infections may include additional symptoms of stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, tremor, muscle weakness, convulsions and paralysis.

West Nile encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain caused by WNV, a disease transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. People should avoid touching a dead bird with bare hands.

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease. EEE virus occurs in the eastern half of the United States where it causes disease in humans, horses, and some bird species. Because of the high mortality rate, EEE is regarded as one of the most serious mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.

Additional Information can be accessed on the county web site at <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/health>

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