



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services



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Scott Walker, Governor  
Kitty Rhoades, Secretary

*Healthy people and places*

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION  
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CONTACTS

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## **STATE REPORTS FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE THIS YEAR IN DANE COUNTY**

***Number of Dead Birds Found with the Virus Increases***

MADISON WI – July 22, 2013 – State and local health officials announced today that the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) was diagnosed in a Dane County resident. Health officials are reminding people to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

This is the first case of human WNV illness reported in the state during 2013. During 2012, 57 Wisconsin residents developed symptomatic WNV infection, and five of these reported cases occurred among Dane County residents.

Officials also confirmed that statewide, 10 dead birds have tested positive for WNV so far this season. The birds were found in nine counties: Chippewa, Dunn, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Oneida, Rock, Vilas, Washington, and Wood. Infected birds serve as an early warning by indicating that WNV is present in an area, underscoring the need for residents to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

The likelihood of contracting WNV infection is low and most people infected with the virus will not have symptoms. Those who do become ill may develop a fever, headache, rash, muscle and joint aches, nausea, vomiting and fatigue that can last a few days. Symptoms may begin three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. In rare cases, WNV can cause severe disease including encephalitis and meningitis. Severe symptoms include high fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, convulsions, paralysis and coma. Older adults and people

with compromised immune systems are at an increased risk of severe disease caused by the virus.

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection other than to treat symptoms. If you think you have WNV infection, contact your healthcare provider.

WNV is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito and is not transmitted person to person. Although few mosquitoes actually carry the virus, it is important to take steps to minimize your exposure during mosquito season:

- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply insect repellent to clothing as well as exposed skin because mosquitoes may bite through clothing.
- Make sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquito entry.
- Properly dispose of items that hold water, such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or discarded tires to prevent mosquito breeding. Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools, boats and canoes when not in use.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim tall grass, weeds and vines because mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Landscape to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.

The Department of Health Services and Public Health – Madison and Dane County will continue surveillance activities for West Nile virus in dead birds until October. As part of the surveillance effort, residents are encouraged to report sick or dead crows, blue jays and ravens to the Dead Bird Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

For more information regarding West Nile virus in Wisconsin, visit:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/ArboviralDiseases/WestNileVirus/Index.htm>

For further background information regarding West Nile virus, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html)

For WNV information in Dane County, call Public Health – Madison and Dane County at (608) 266-4821.

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