



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[www.kanehealth.com](http://www.kanehealth.com)

### **Mosquito pool tests positive for West Nile virus**

The Kane County Health Department today announced that its first mosquito pool of the season tested positive for West Nile virus. The pool was collected in the Montgomery area.

There have been no reported human cases in Kane County or Illinois so far this year. Last year, Kane County saw three human cases, in 2007 there were 13 cases. In 2006 there were four, 17 in 2005, two in 2004, none in 2003 and nine in 2002.

Stagnant pools of water can become excellent breeding grounds for the Culex species, the mosquito which is the most common mosquito to carry West Nile virus. “Although we haven’t had the hot, dry weather this year that boosts the Culex mosquito activity, residents still need to take precautions against West Nile virus at least until the first hard frost,” Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert said. “Until then, we can expect to continue to identify positive mosquito pools and human cases in Kane County.”

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

Only about two persons out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Illness from West Nile is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.

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The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Use prevention methods whenever mosquitoes are present.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including flowerpots, clogged roof gutters, old tires and any other receptacles. Change water in bird baths weekly. Properly maintain wading pools and stock ornamental ponds with fish. Cover rain barrels with 16 mesh wire screen. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Following heavy rains and flooding, we usually see an increase in nuisance mosquito activity. The nuisance mosquito (*Aedes* species), which breeds in flood waters and temporary pools of water, does not typically transmit West Nile Virus disease but it is an aggressive and hard biter and is active throughout the day not just at dusk and dawn.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Kane County Health Department's Web site at [www.kanehealth.com](http://www.kanehealth.com) or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site at [www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm). People also can call the IDPH West Nile Virus Hotline at (866) 369-9710 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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