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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NEWS

First Human Cases of West Nile Virus Reported in Hamilton County this Season

HAMILTON COUNTY, Ohio – Hamilton County Public Health is reporting the county's first two human cases of West Nile Virus. Both cases are identified as coming from the Western side of Hamilton County.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a viral disease affecting the central nervous system that can be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. It is important to note that most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will never become sick. Everyone, however, should be aware of the symptoms of WNV. Symptoms may develop two-15 days after someone is bitten by an infected mosquito.

No Symptoms in Most People. Approximately 80 percent of people (about four out of five) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

Milder Symptoms in Some People. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will display symptoms which can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have been sick for several weeks.

Serious Symptoms in a Few People. It is estimated that approximately one in 150 (fewer than one percent) persons infected with West Nile Virus will develop a more severe form of disease. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks and neurological effects may be permanent.

While all residents of areas where virus activity has been identified are at risk, people over age 50 have the highest risk of developing severe WNV infections. Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms should contact their healthcare provider for evaluation.

NEWS

“West Nile Virus is here to stay and we already knew mosquitoes in Hamilton County were carrying the virus,” according to Hamilton County Health Commissioner, Tim Ingram. “Because humans only become infected when bitten by an infected mosquito, it is important that we all take action to protect ourselves and our property from mosquitoes,” Ingram adds.

When WNV-positive mosquitoes or human cases are identified, Hamilton County Public Health staff canvas a half-mile radius in the area to advise residents about steps they can take to reduce the mosquito population and prevent mosquito bites, including the **DRAIN, DUNK** and **PROTECT** method:

DRAIN

- Look for and drain sources of standing water on your property – litter, tires, buckets, flower pots, wading pools and similar items that could create standing water and become mosquito breeding sites.
- Frequently change water in bird baths and pet bowls.
- Drain small puddles after heavy rainstorms.

DUNK

- Apply mosquito larvicide, sometimes called mosquito “dunks,” to areas of standing water that cannot be drained. The “dunks” are environmentally safe and won’t harm pets. You can purchase them at your local hardware store.

PROTECT

- Cut your grass and trim shrubbery.
- Make sure screens in windows and doors are tight-fitting and free from defects.
- Wear long sleeves and pants during peak mosquito hours – dawn and dusk.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the package.

For more information on West Nile Virus, please contact Hamilton County Public Health at (513) 946-7800 or visit us online at www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.

Download our Homeowner’s Guide to Mosquito Control on our Website:
www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org/files/MosBrochure.pdf.

View our West Nile Virus video at www.youtube.com/hamcohealth .