



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST POSITIVE WEST NILE VIRUS CASE IN WESTCHESTER Health Department reminds residents to take precautions against mosquitoes

Westchester County has learned of its first human case of West Nile Virus this year, which was confirmed in a 63-year-old Briarcliff Manor resident who had been hospitalized, and is now recovering at home.

The Westchester County Department of Health found signs of mosquito breeding activity around the resident's home and removed them.

"This first case of West Nile Virus should serve as a reminder to residents to take precautions against mosquito bites by removing standing water from their property after it rains and using repellents when they spend time outdoors, especially from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active," said Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health.

The Health Department prepared for the mosquito season by educating the public through news releases and Keep Healthy and Bug Off messages distributed through flyers, social media, and on our website, by giving fathead minnows to residents with ponds to reduce the mosquito population and by evaluating and treating as needed with larvicide all catch basins on county and municipal roads throughout Westchester. Throughout the season, the Department also traps and tests mosquitoes to track the presence of mosquito-borne viruses in the county. West Nile Virus was identified in two local mosquito batches starting July 18.

West Nile Virus infection most often causes a mild or moderate flu-like illness, but can be more serious particularly for people 60 and older, and those with other health complications. No residents were diagnosed with West Nile Virus last year, but from 2010 to 2015, two to four residents were diagnosed each year and all recovered.

To reduce the chances for mosquitoes to breed and bite around your home, watch Assistant Commissioner Peter DeLucia in this brief video on the Department of Health website at

<http://health.westchestergov.com/west-nile-virus> and follow these tips:

- Avoid the outdoors in the late afternoon and early evening when mosquitoes are active and feeding, and use insect repellents when outdoors during these times. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label.

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- Adults can apply insect repellents with up to 30 percent DEET on infants over two months of age by applying the product to their own hands and then rubbing their hands on their children. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under two months of age.
- Wear protective clothing, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks, when outdoors, especially in areas where mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Check around your property for tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that should be discarded or turned over to prevent collecting water.
- Check and remove standing water from children's toys and play houses left outside.
- Remove discarded tires.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Turn over plastic wading pools, buckets and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris.
- Even with the swimming season over, continue to chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs until properly winterized or drained for the season. Also, if not chlorinated, drain any water that collects on their covers.

Residents who notice large areas of standing water on public property should report this to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.

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