

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

Date: July 31, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Catherine Cioffi

Communications Director

Office - (914) 995-2932

Cell- (914) 954 -5579

CCioffi@westchestergov.com

Caren Halbfinger

Office – (914) 813-5013

Cell – (914) 224-7651

Cqh4@westchestergov.com

**MOSQUITOES WITH WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN WESTCHESTER
County Health Department Announces First Positive Batch of Mosquitoes for 2018;
Reminds Residents to Remove Standing Water and Use Repellants**

The Westchester County Health Department announced that this season's first two batches of mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus in Westchester were identified in Yonkers. The area surrounding the positive mosquito batches was inspected by the Health Department, which has treated nearby catch basins to protect against further mosquito breeding nearby.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer recommended residents follow the Health Department's West Nile Virus prevention advice to avoid mosquito bites by using repellents and removing standing water after it rains.

"Mosquitoes are often thought of as merely a nuisance but they can carry serious diseases, including West Nile Virus," Latimer said. "With more rain expected this week, it's important to remember we can keep mosquitoes from breeding and biting us in our own backyards if we pour out standing water after it rains and remove or turn over wheelbarrows and watering cans."

To date, these are the first two positive batches out of 134 batches of mosquitoes collected in Westchester that were tested for West Nile Virus by the New York State Department of Health. Statewide, the state Health Department had identified 69 positive mosquito batches as of July 20.

"The summer months are when we expect to find mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus here," said Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health. "Besides removing standing water around your home, to protect yourself and your family when you spend time outdoors, it's a good idea to use repellents, especially from dawn to dusk, when mosquitoes are most active."

The Health Department prepared for the mosquito season by educating the public through news releases, flyers, social media and our website, where a new report on mosquito control and surveillance can be found on the [West Nile Virus page](#). The Health Department also gave 400 pounds of free fathead minnows to residents with ponds to reduce the mosquito population. The minnows reduce the mosquito population by feeding on larvae and pupae before they emerge into adult mosquitoes.

Throughout the season, the Department also traps and tests mosquitoes to track the presence of mosquito-borne viruses in the County. Last year, West Nile Virus was identified in five local mosquito batches out of 380 submitted for testing and three people were diagnosed with West Nile Virus.

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. Three residents were diagnosed with West Nile Virus last year and all recovered.

To reduce the chances for mosquitoes to breed and bite around your home, 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. Follow the label instructions.
- To protect infants over two months of age, adults can apply insect repellents with up to 30 percent DEET to their own hands and then rub it onto their children. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under two months of age.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when outdoors, especially in areas where mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Discard or turn over cans, plastic containers and ceramic pots outside your home to avoid accumulating water.
- Remove standing water from outdoor toys and play houses.
- 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.
- 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 them to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

Follow Westchester County

www.facebook.com/wchealthdept

www.twitter.com/wchealthdept



[Facebook](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Youtube](#) - [Instagram](#)

###