

**GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MOSQUITOES WITH WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN WESTCHESTER** ***County Health Department Reminds Residents to Remove Standing Water and Use Repellents***

(White Plains, NY) – The Westchester County Health Department announced that this season’s first batches of mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus in Westchester were detected in Elmsford, Hastings, Mount Vernon and Rye. The areas surrounding the positive mosquito batches were being inspected today by the Health Department, and nearby catch basins that hold standing water will be treated to protect against further mosquito breeding nearby.

With heavy rains expected overnight, Westchester County Executive George Latimer recommended residents follow the Health Department’s West Nile Virus prevention advice to avoid mosquito bites.

County Executive George Latimer said: “We can make our backyards less inviting breeding grounds for mosquitoes by pouring out standing water after it rains and we can make ourselves less tempting targets by using repellents.”

To date, these are the first positives out of 166 batches of mosquitos collected from 11 locations throughout Westchester that were tested for West Nile Virus by the New York State Department of Health and were analyzed on Tuesday. New York City announced on Aug. 4 that it had detected West Nile Virus in mosquitos in all five boroughs. Last year, 10 Westchester batches of mosquitoes had West Nile Virus out of 243 submitted for testing, with the virus first detected in mosquitoes collected on July 24.

Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health, said: “With so many of us spending more time outdoors, protect yourself and your family by using repellents. Apply sunscreen first, and repellent second.”

The Health Department reminds residents about mosquito safety through news releases, social media and our website, where a report on mosquito control and surveillance can be found on the [West Nile Virus page](#). Throughout the season, the Department also traps and tests mosquitoes to track the presence of mosquito-borne viruses.

So far this year, there have been no reported cases of West Nile Virus in Westchester. Symptoms include fever, headache, body aches and joint pain, but can be more serious for people 60 and older, and those with underlying medical conditions.

For more ideas on how to reduce the mosquito population near your home, go to <https://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, or use insect repellents then and follow the label instructions.
- Adults can use 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 it onto their children, avoiding their hands, eyes and mouth. 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.
- Check around your property for anything that can hold water, and pour it out or put it away.
- 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.
- 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 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](http://www.westchestergov.com)

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