

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST POSITIVE WEST NILE VIRUS CASE IN WESTCHESTER IN 2018

Health Department reminds residents to take precautions against mosquitoes

(White Plains, NY) – Westchester County has learned of its first human case of West Nile Virus this year, which was confirmed in a 72-year-old Irvington resident who had been hospitalized, and is now recovering at home.

The Westchester County Department of Health found no signs of mosquito breeding activity around the resident’s home but treated surrounding catch basins with larvicide.

“This first case of West Nile Virus serves to remind all of us to take precautions against mosquito bites by removing standing water from our property after it rains and using repellents when we 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, 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. So far this year, West Nile Virus was identified in three batches of local mosquitoes out of 199 batches tested so far. 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.

To learn how to reduce the chances for mosquitoes to breed and bite around your home, watch this short video 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.
- 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.
- Turn over or discard cans, buckets, ceramic pots or water-holding containers.
- 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.
- Chlorinate 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.

Report large areas of standing water on public property 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

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