



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 22, 2018

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West Nile Virus Detected in Birds in Kalamazoo County

KALAMAZOO, MI— The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department reports that West Nile virus has been detected in several birds collected in Kalamazoo County and sampled by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

August is peak season for West Nile virus activity in Michigan. Other communities, including Metro Detroit and Grand Rapids, have previously reported increased West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes collected in their areas. There have been no human cases of West Nile virus with symptoms reported in the State of Michigan this year.

West Nile virus is carried by certain types of mosquitoes and is a potentially serious disease that can affect anyone. The risk of bites from infected mosquitoes is highest for people who work or play outdoors. Wearing insect repellent when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, is important to prevent West Nile virus.

Residents should be aware of sick-acting or dead birds, especially crows and blue jays, as that may be an indication of West Nile virus in a community. Residents can report sick-acting or dead wildlife to the DNR by submitting an [online report](#).

The best way to protect you and your family against West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to prevent mosquito bites by following the tips below:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other EPA-approved products to exposed skin or clothing, and always following the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes lay eggs.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Most people who become infected with West Nile virus will not develop any symptoms. However, some become sick three to 15 days after exposure. About one in five infected persons will have a mild illness which may include fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea or rash. About one in 150 infected people will become very sick. Severe West Nile virus disease includes infections of the brain that may become apparent with symptoms such as a stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, muscle weakness, convulsions, and paralysis. People 60 and older are more susceptible to severe West Nile virus disease symptoms and should take proactive measures to prevent mosquito bites.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus.

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