

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Urges Residents to Protect Themselves Against West Nile Virus

BALTIMORE, MD- (July, 28, 2008)- The Baltimore City Health Department is urging city residents to protect themselves against West Nile Virus, a virus borne by infected mosquitoes that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall. About one in 150 infected people will develop severe illness. Severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

To avoid infection with West Nile Virus, prevent mosquito bites.

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, which can be found through this link:
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/RepellentUpdates.htm>
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

In addition, individuals can assist in reducing the number of infected mosquitoes by eliminating possible mosquito breeding grounds. Mosquitoes breed and lay their eggs in any amount of standing water, no matter how small or large. Preventative measures include:

- Remove all discarded tires from your property.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths.
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.

If you should observe stagnant water that is not being addressed by the property owner, please call 311 and file a complaint. The Department will investigate all complaints. Should mosquito

larvae be found, the Department will apply larvicide to prevent the maturation of the mosquito eggs. As of June 2008, the Health Department has received fourteen complaints regarding mosquitoes and standing water without discovery of any larvae. The Department is also in the process of conducting limited trapping and mosquito identification in areas of high concern.

About 20 percent of infected individuals develop milder symptoms, which may include fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks. And the majority of the population, about 80 percent, shows no symptoms at all.

People over 50 should note that they are more likely to develop serious symptoms of WNV and should take extra special precaution to avoid mosquito bites. Those suffering from more serious symptoms should seek medical attention.

There were six Baltimore city cases of West Nile Virus reported in 2006, and none in 2007 or so far in 2008.

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